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THE HARPER HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

VOLUME ONE

VOLUME ONE

THE HARPER



Joseph Ward Swain

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

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PREFACE

THE historian finds many twistings and turnings in the course of human history, but no sharp breaks. For convenience we may speak of the history of the United States, or of medieval history, or of political or economic history, but such divisions of the field are always quite arbitrary, and historians rarely agree as to exactly what should be included in each. Even the division between a.c. and a.d. seems important only to Christian peoples. Being the story of civilization itself, history is universal in its length, stretching over all the ages from the first appearance of man on our planet to the present moment; it is universal in its breadth, covering all the nations and peoples of the earth; and it is universal in its depth, including every form of human activity. All these human activities, woven together, make up one gigantic story. The story is infinitely complex, but it is one story none the less. There is no history save universal history.

Students should therefore begin by familiarizing themselves with the general outline of universal history, even though such a view must necessarily be quite superficial. Those who wish to profit most from their studies will then proceed to a more detailed examination of the history of a few selected periods and places, and if they are equipped with this preliminary view of universal history, they will see narrower fields in a truer perspective than would otherwise have been possible. Moreover, they will quickly discover that even the most detailed studies are quite superficial. No one can tell everything that happened, and no one wants to. The most that can be done is to indicate the general course of human events, to analyze the major problems men have faced at one time or another, to show how men have tried to meet them, and thus to stimulate students to think more deeply and more imaginatively about the manifold problems facing humanity today. This is the greatest benefit that may be derived from the study of history.

No one person can master the whole field of human history, however, and it is with fear and trepidation that I have written this book. I would probably not have undertaken the task, had I foreseen the labor that it

would require, and now that it is finished I am appalled at my early audacity. I certainly would never have brought this volume to completion without the encouragement and aid of many friends, most of whom must remain anonymous. Nevertheless, I wish to express my gratitude to many colleagues who have read chapters and helped me generously with their constructive criticisms. Among them I must mention Professor E. Harris Harbison of Princeton, President Robert G. Bone of the Illinois State Normal University, Professor W. J. Bouwsma of the University of California at Berkeley, Professor Theodore S. Hamerow of the University of Wisconsin; and at the University of Illinois Professors Ernest Dawn, Frederick C. Dietz, Deno Geanakoplos, Norman A. Graebner, Bryce Lyon, Charles E. Nowell, John B. Sirich, Chester C. Starr, and Raymond P. Stearns. Much of the material in the first six chapters is taken from my book, *The Ancient World*, published by Harper & Brothers in 1950; some of that in the last six comes from my earlier book, *Beginning the Twentieth Century*, published by W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., in 1933. I am indebted to each of these publishers for permission to use this material once more. And above all, I am indebted to my wife, Margaret Hatfield Swain, who, as always, has followed the best traditions and done all those things for which wives are usually thanked in prefaces.

JOSEPH WARD SWAIN

September, 1957

Swiss Lake Village (*American Museum of Natural History*)



IN THE BEGINNING...

FOUNDATIONS—THE NEOLITHIC AGE

Geologic Periods		Men		Cultures in Europe	Began B.C.	Duration
		Asia and Africa	Europe		(in 1000's of years)	
PLIOCENE PERIOD					7000	6000
PLEISTOCENE PERIOD	I Glacial epoch	[First men ?]			1000	230
	I Interglacial				770	60
	II Glacial epoch	Pithecanthropus Sinanthropus East African (?)	Heidelberg Swanscombe		710	130
	II Interglacial				580	150
	III Glacial epoch		Fontéchevade	Pre-Chellean Chellean	430	170
	III Interglacial			Achulean	260	100
	IV Glacial epoch	Rhadesian Man	Neanderthal	Mousterian	160	140
				Paleolithic		
RECENT PERIOD		Homo sapiens	Homa sapiens	Aurignacian	20	
			Cro-Magnon	Solutrean	13	
				Magdolenian	10	
				Mesolithic	7	
			Modern	Neolithic	3	

I. FOUNDATIONS

ALL men eat food, but different men have different ways of conveying it to their mouths. Some use forks, some use chopsticks, some use only their fingers. A similar diversity may be observed in most other human activities. Some men do things one way, others do them another. On closer examination, however, we note that the entire population of a given area usually does them in much the same way while other peoples in other areas do them differently. Americans use forks, for example, but the Chinese use chopsticks. Historians and sociologists give the name "culture group" to the people who accept the same general pattern of behavior. Even the most inventive or the most eccentric members of a culture group usually follow its standardized patterns, especially when engaged in their everyday activities. Men often conform to these patterns of behavior merely for convenience; sometimes they are forced by their fellows to conform; but usually they are taught to do so by formal or informal education. Men act as they do because they have been trained to act thus, and members of a culture group follow the same patterns because they have received similar educations. Their ways of doing things seem obvious to them, but persons endowed with only slight mental elasticity are likely to regard the behavior patterns of other culture groups as queer, or unreasonable, or ridiculous, or perhaps even as wicked.

These patterns of behavior, shared by groups of persons and passed on from one generation to another by education, are sometimes concerned with trivial matters—as in the case of using chopsticks rather than forks—but sometimes they deal with matters so important that social life would be difficult or impossible without uniformity in the group concerning them. Thus each culture group has its own language, its own type of family organization, its own form or forms of

*Patterns of
behavior*

*Cultures and
civilizations*

economic activity, its own system of law, its own ideas about the nature and desirable form of government, its own standards and techniques in art and literature, its own scientific knowledge, its own views regarding the world and man, its own beliefs about the gods and the proper way to worship them. These various ways of acting and thinking make up the group's "culture." When the group becomes very large and its organization complex, a culture is called a "civilization."

*The legacy
of the past*

As there are many possible ways of organizing a family, governing a state, or worshipping the gods, there are many possible civilizations. The world has seen many in the past, and many exist on earth today, each characterized by its own distinctive way of life. Sometimes these civilizations endure for many centuries—that is to say, certain groups of men go on living in approximately the same way all that time. But sometimes civilizations change rather rapidly, new patterns of behavior being invented while old ones fall into disuse. Even in the most revolutionary periods, however, most men go on much as before, and the most progressive civilizations retain most of their legacy from the past. To understand a civilization it is necessary to know this legacy, and it is our present purpose to study Western civilization historically. We must begin by examining its origin in the ancient Near East more than six thousand years ago, after which we shall trace its development through Greece and Rome, the Middle Ages and early modern times, down to our own day. But there have always been other civilizations too, and our Western civilization is now shared by considerably less than one-third of the world's population. Attention must therefore be paid to other great civilizations if we are to understand the world today. We cannot discuss them fully, yet we dare not utterly neglect them.

EARTH HISTORY

*The earth
and man*

All civilizations are the creations of men, and they cannot be understood apart from their creators. Our introductory sketch of the earliest civilizations must therefore be preceded by a brief account of the earliest history of man, and this in turn presupposes a knowledge of the history of the earth upon which he lived. We must begin with a sketch of earth history.

*Age of the
earth*

Scientists tell us that the earth came into existence as much as four billion years ago. It developed a solid crust; parts of it were covered

with seas and oceans of water; it was surrounded by air; and its temperature gradually moderated. It has since gone through an elaborate history. Great chains of mountains have been thrown up, often reaching altitudes as high as 25,000 feet (almost the height of Mount Everest which, at 29,000 feet, is the loftiest mountain on earth today), and then been washed away by the erosion of rivers until only low flat plains remained. The earth has gone through this cycle many times. The oldest mountains existing on earth today are the Urals and the Appalachians, whose age is only about 200 million years (or about one-twentieth that of the earth itself), yet they are already eroded to about one-quarter of their original height. The Cascades and the Himalayas, on the other hand, are only a few million years old, and perhaps the latter are still rising.

The earth has also seen great changes in climate. Coal deposits in Spitzbergen (80° north latitude) and others within three hundred miles of the South Pole, and coral reefs off Greenland, show that these regions once enjoyed a subtropical climate. There is also evidence to indicate that at other times glaciers, similar to those now covering much of Greenland and Antarctica, reached almost to the tropics. As might be expected, the cold periods followed those of active mountain building, when high mountain ranges formed convenient centers for the formation of glaciers. The most recent of these glacial epochs, known to geologists as the Pleistocene, began less than a million years ago. In this country the ice advanced from Canada south as far as the Ohio and Missouri rivers; in Europe it spread out from Scandinavia to cover Russia west of Moscow, the greater part of Poland, Germany, northern France, and the British Isles. These Pleistocene ice sheets advanced and retreated four times, with long "interglacial periods" between each advance. The fourth and last glacial advance began about 150,000 years ago, the last retreat began about 25,000 years ago, and the glaciers had withdrawn to approximately their present position in Scandinavia by 5000 B.C. Many authorities believe that today we are living in the early part of another interglacial period, but they expect the climate to become considerably warmer than at present before it turns cold and the glaciers return after some 100,000 years. This Pleistocene or glacial epoch is of great importance to us since it witnessed the first appearance of man.

**Glacial
epochs**

It is quite impossible to say when or how life upon our planet began. The earliest and simplest living beings presumably were tiny one-celled organisms living in the water, but they left no traces be-

**Early forms
of life**

hind them. Similar forms of life, still existing today, can be seen with the aid of a microscope. About a billion years ago, when earth history had already run three billion years, many-celled forms of life began to appear, as is shown by their fossil remains. Dividing the time in half, we find vertebrate fish as well reptiles, insects, and ferns living on dry land about 500 million years ago. Three hundred million years later, at about the time of the birth of the Appalachian Mountains, came the giant reptiles (dinosaurs), the earliest birds and mammals, and the trees and flowering plants. Not until a mere sixty million years ago did the most recent geologic era (the Cenozoic) appear, with modern mammals, grasses, and fruit trees. Early in this Cenozoic era appeared the earliest members of the order of mammals known as Primates. Today this order includes lemurs and monkeys, the great anthropoid (manlike) apes, and man himself.

*The coming
of man*

The earliest known skeleton of an ape, found in East Africa, dates from about twenty million years ago. Some three or four million years ago apes abounded in the hills of northern India, where the bones of no less than twenty-two separate species have been found, and at about that time apes of still other species lived in Africa. Most of these various species eventually became extinct, but others underwent bodily changes to become the ancestors of the four modern species of ape. Still another species became the ancestor of man. For many years it was widely believed that the transition from ape to man took place in northern India or central Asia, but quite recently new evidence has encouraged many anthropologists to prefer Africa as the scene of man's origin. In either case, the great transformation is to be associated with the climatic changes that accompanied the glacial advance. In mountainous regions most forms of life were destroyed by the ice sheets, and the lowlands, once heavily forested, gradually became grassland or even desert. The apes of the forest therefore either perished or adapted themselves to life on the ground, finding new forms of food, accepting a new way of life, and developing new physical features to suit their new environment. Some evolved into apes of the modern species; others became the first men. If this theory is correct, humanity has existed upon earth for rather more than half a million years.

*Brevity
of human
history*

The immensity of the period covered by earth history may confuse us, but it also impresses upon us the brevity of human history, just as stellar spaces overwhelm us with their revelation of the relative

minuteness of our solar system. Perhaps we will understand things better if we make a simple comparison. Let us assume that the billion years during which life has existed upon earth were compressed, according to scale, into one year. Forty years, or half the life span of a man, would then rush by as one second, and one day would represent more than three and a third million years. According to this timetable, the Appalachian Mountains rose about seven weeks ago, the Cascades and Himalayas only yesterday or the day before; mankind first appeared about five hours ago; the pyramids of Egypt were built two minutes ago; Caesar was murdered some fifty seconds ago; and Columbus discovered America less than twelve seconds ago! By this same schedule, the American Republic has existed for less than five seconds in the long year of life upon our planet.

THE FIRST MEN

All men now living upon earth belong to the species known as *Homo sapiens*, but fossil skeletons found in various parts of the world prove that formerly there were other species of the genus *Homo* as well as other genera of "Hominids." The earliest known human fossils are parts of the skeleton of a member of the genus *Pithecanthropus erectus* (ape-man), found in Java in 1891; other human bones of the same type have since been found in the same locality. Other important fossil remains, found near Peking, China, between 1927 and 1936, bear witness to another genus of man now known as *Sinanthropus* (China man). These bones are enough to prove that their owners were closer to modern men than to apes. In size their brains were about halfway between those of the chimpanzee and those of modern men. Perhaps *Pithecanthropus* was somewhat earlier than *Sinanthropus*, but the two were roughly contemporary, and apparently they lived in the second interglacial period.

**The first
men in Asia**

These early fossils were found in Asia, but they do not greatly antedate the first similar bones discovered in Europe. The lower jaw and teeth of an ancient man, somewhat resembling his Asiatic consins, were found in a gravel pit near Heidelberg, Germany, in 1907, and in 1935 parts of a human skull of similar age were found embedded in the banks of the Thames at Swanscombe near London. Though representing distinct species of men, these fossils, dating from the second interglacial period, are roughly contemporary with those of *Pithecanthropus* and *Sinanthropus*. Other very ancient bones, belonging to

**Early
Europeans**

still another species of man, were found in East Africa in 1932, but their date has not been definitely established.

Neanderthal
"cave men"

During the third interglacial and the fourth glacial periods much of Europe was inhabited by men of a species known as *Homo neanderthalensis*, or Neanderthal man. More than sixty skeletons of men of this species have been discovered, some of them virtually complete. The species derives its name from Neanderthal, in western Germany, where a typical skeleton was found in 1856. Other skeletons of the same type have since been found in Belgium, at several places in France and Spain, in central Germany, in Yugoslavia, and more recently in the Crimea, in Palestine, and in Italy, and very similar skeletons have been found in Rhodesia in South Africa. The Neanderthal men were short, males rarely exceeding five feet three inches in height and females being even shorter. Their posture was slouching, their necks short and muscular, their faces and heads thrust forward. Their foreheads were low and receding, and their mental development was slight, though the capacity of their brain cases equaled, or was even slightly superior to, that of the average European of today. Probably these men advanced out of Asia during the third interglacial period (or perhaps earlier, if the Heidelberg man was their ancestor or advance guard), and though they survived the rigors of the fourth glacial period in southern France, they became extinct soon after. In our own day these Neanderthals have been imaginatively glorified into the "cave men" of comic legend and mythology. They are even pictured as playing with, fighting with, or domesticating dinosaurs—which had then been extinct for about a hundred million years!

Homo
sapiens

Toward the end of the fourth glacial period western Europe was invaded by men of an entirely different species, known as Cro-Magnons. Anthropologists recognize the invaders as members of the species *Homo sapiens*—the allegedly intelligent branch of the human family—to which all men now living on the earth belong. Some authorities believe that the newcomers mingled with the Neanderthals; but if the two groups really belonged to different species of the genus *Homo*, as seems incontrovertible, their progeny would have been sterile hybrids. We may therefore assume that the Neanderthals were exterminated and that none of their blood flows in the veins of modern men. Probably many Neanderthals were killed in battle, but others starved after being worsted in the struggle for the limited supplies of food: their heavy bodies put them at a disadvantage in com-

peting with the more lithe newcomers, who enjoyed the further advantages of greater adaptability and higher intelligence.

Darkness still surrounds the origin of *Homo sapiens* though recent discoveries have thrown a little light on the subject. Mankind probably divided into several genera soon after descending from the trees, and further subdivisions into species followed later. The species *Homo sapiens* is therefore probably as ancient as *Homo heidelbergensis* or any other species of the genus *Homo*. If, as now seems likely, the East African fossils discovered in 1932 and the Swanscombe man found in 1935 are from members of our species, they would prove that it inhabited Africa and Europe as early as the second interglacial period, and a skull found in 1947 at Fontéchevade, in southwestern France, shows that such men were living there early in the third interglacial period, before the coming of the Neanderthals. What happened to the Fontéchevade race we do not know: perhaps it did not survive the rigors of the glacial age. At any rate, the Cro-Magnons and other races of *Homo sapiens* invaded Europe from Africa at the close of the fourth glacial period. As the glaciers receded other members of this species spread rapidly over the entire earth, supplanting all other species of men. Even before this great dispersion, however, the species had subdivided into the different races that now compose humanity.

**His
antiquity**

Newspapers have occasionally reported the discovery of evidence for man in America in glacial or even preglacial times, but no such evidence has ever stood up under scientific scrutiny. It can be stated with some assurance that no human species except *Homo sapiens* ever lived in America and that the earliest men to reach our shores came from Asia by way of Alaska after the withdrawal of the fourth glacier, less than twenty thousand years ago. Though the continent lay open before them, they did not occupy it all for several centuries.

**The first
Americans**

PALEOLITHIC CIVILIZATIONS

Dry bones thus prove the earth to have been inhabited by men who belonged to species different from our own and whose dates can be determined from the geologic levels in which their remains are found, but they tell us little about the culture or civilization of these early men. For such information we must turn to archeology, "the science of ancient things." The archeologist learns about early civilizations

**Archeo-
logical
studies**



PALEOLITHIC MEN HUNTING REINDEER. This drawing, found in a cave at Alpera, Spain, shows Cro-Magnon men hunting reindeer with bows and arrows. Presumably it was believed to possess magic powers to aid the hunters. Note the three arrows in one of the deer. (American Museum of Natural History, New York)

by studying their material debris. The foundations of a building, a broken piece of pottery, a flint arrowhead, or a "fist hatchet" can be very eloquent for a trained student of archeology. During the last hundred years archeologists have systematically explored many regions inhabited by early men and have collected thousands of examples of their handiwork. The study of these objects has made it possible to sketch the general outlines of the cultural history of early man.

**Paleolithic
and
neolithic
times**

The first relics of primitive civilization to attract attention were stone implements such as pounders, knives, or arrowheads, and the early archeologists therefore spoke of this period as the "Stone Age." A little study showed, however, that these early civilizations differed widely among themselves, and it seemed better to divide the period into two parts. They are now known as the "Old Stone Age" and the "New Stone Age," or more commonly as paleolithic and neolithic times. (The Greek word *palaios* means "old" and *lithos*, "stone"; *neos* means "new.") It was then noticed that the use of metals brought further radical changes in civilization, and archeologists listed the Copper Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age as following neolithic times.

Early in the Copper Age men learned to write, and thereafter they left written records of themselves and their achievements. Until quite recently historians used only such records when studying the past, and those parts of the past from which written records remain were therefore called "historic times." The periods before the invention of writing, of which we learn only from the archeologists, were then called "prehistoric times"—though they had a history that is of great importance in the general history of mankind. In later chapters we shall see that archeology also provides valuable information about historic times, supplementing the written records, especially in early times when such records were scanty. Now that our terms have been defined, let us turn to an examination of paleolithic civilization.

**Historic
and
prehistoric
times**

The bones of both *Pithecanthropus* and *Sinanthropus* show their brains well developed in the areas associated with speech, which would seem to indicate that these men could talk after a fashion, or at least communicate simple ideas to one another by means of sounds. If so, they had made a tremendous step forward, for the power of speech is prerequisite to all civilization. *Sinanthropus* had gone even farther, for crude stone tools were found with his bones, and nearby layers of ashes show that he could use fire: if he had not yet learned to kindle a new fire, he at least knew how to preserve for his own use fires started by lightning or other natural forces. Nothing of human manufacture was found near the Heidelberg jaw, but flint tools dating from the second interglacial period, not associated with human skeletons, have been found at sites in England, France, Spain, and Egypt. Even more significant is the fact that the leg bone of our *Pithecanthropus* shows that he had been severely wounded but had recovered from his injuries: he must have been incapacitated for several weeks, during which time his fellows must have fed and cared for him. Even at this early time men thus betrayed something akin to humanitarian sentiment.

**Language,
fire, and
stone tools**

Mousterian Culture

We have much fuller information about civilization in western Europe during the third interglacial and fourth glacial periods. A culture called Achulean, from the French village where it was first studied, prevailed in western Europe during the third interglacial period. Presumably it was the work of men like the one found at Fontéchevade. It was followed by Mousterian culture, associated with

**Achulean
and
Mousterian
cultures**

Neanderthal men. A characteristic Mousterian tool was the "fist hatchet," a pear-shaped stone with one end rounded to fit the hand and the other chipped to an edge or point, which could be used for cutting or pounding. By attaching a wooden handle to such a stone, a crude ax could be made. Men also made other flint tools, such as scrapers to clean the inside of skins, knives to cut them with, and borers with which to punch holes in them. They then sewed the furs together to make the clothing which was so essential during the cold glacial period.

**Economic
life**

In those days men were primarily hunters, and in their caves we sometimes find bones of the animals they ate. Strange to say, they hunted and killed such gigantic beasts as the hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, and the elephant. The killing of such thick-skinned animals seems to indicate that the hunters knew how to build snares and traps. Moreover, since individuals, or even small bands of men, could not have successfully attacked such powerful prey, the hunt must have been a coöperative enterprise in which large packs of hunters participated, under some sort of leadership or government. As flint tools are often found long distances from natural supplies of flint, there must have been traders who carried the precious stones from one tribe to another; and while most men probably chipped their own tools, a few skilled craftsmen may even then have earned a livelihood by plying the toolmaker's trade.

Religion

In two or three sites archeologists have found Neanderthal skeletons which were laid out carefully, as if in formal burial. Possibly the implements found nearby were intended for use by the deceased in the next world, which would indicate the benign influence of religion and a belief in some sort of immortality. At other Mousterian sites human bones have been found broken open, as though to extract the marrow, and human heads split as though to lay bare the brains—which suggests the more horrid rites of cannibalism.

**Decline of
Mousterian
culture**

The fourth glacial period saw a great cultural decline. The rigors of the climate made life difficult, food was scarce, the caves were unhealthy, and physical degeneration began. Had more favorable climatic conditions prevailed, Neanderthal men might have made greater progress, but their slowness in learning what little they knew suggests that they had gone about as far as their brains could carry them. Had they remained supreme, Europe might today be populated only by men at about the cultural level of the modern Australian aborigines.

Upper Paleolithic Cultures

The coming of *Homo sapiens* brought great cultural changes and provided western Europe with several new cultures or civilizations, which are called "upper paleolithic" to distinguish them from Mousterian and other "lower paleolithic" cultures. The most famous of these upper paleolithic cultures is the Magdalenian, which prevailed in southern France and northern Spain for several centuries about 10,000 B.C. It was the creation of the Cro-Magnons. These men were still hunters, especially skillful at pursuing the wild horse and the reindeer. They showed greatly improved techniques in chipping flint, they made tools of bone and horn, and they invented the bow and arrow. As the climate was still cool, they sometimes lived in caves, but they had learned to build primitive huts. Artisans must have devoted their lives to perfecting these various skills. Moreover,

**Magda-
lenian
culture**



BISON. This realistic painting was found with several other paintings in a cave near Altamira in northern Spain. (American Museum of Natural History, New York)

personal ornaments made of shells coming from long distances away indicate extensive trade or barter. It is obvious, therefore, that the tribe was no longer a mere hunting pack and that within it there was division of labor and a specialization in different crafts. There must have been a fairly elaborate organization along economic, social, and political lines, but unfortunately we know nothing as to the exact nature of these social institutions.

Cave
paintings

The crowning glory of Magdalenian civilization was its art. Whereas Neanderthal man apparently had little esthetic interest or feeling, the Cro-Magnons showed high talents in the field of art. Their personal adornment was profuse: necklaces were made of shells or teeth, elaborate headdress was worn, and bodies were painted. It was these men who produced the world-famous paintings of horses, deer, bison, reindeer, bear, and fish which have been found in Spanish caves. Sometimes the walls of caves were also decorated with bas-reliefs, and statues were carved of men and animals. The skill shown by these Cro-Magnon artists was amazing, but presently it went into decline and art became so conventionalized and abstract as to be incomprehensible.

Magic

We naturally ask why men devoted such care to producing these works of art. Some of their productions possessed only esthetic value,



WILLENDORF VENUS. This statuette takes its name from the Austrian village near which it was found. Dating from paleolithic times, it presumably was believed to possess magic properties, perhaps to bring fertility to the women who approached it with the correct prayers or incantations. (American Museum of Natural History, New York)

perhaps, but others were probably connected with magic. The statuettes may have been fetishes, believed to possess magic powers, and perhaps the paintings were supposed to help in hunting the animals depicted. These paintings are usually to be found in the darkest recesses of caves, where their esthetic qualities could hardly have been appreciated but where magic rites might have taken place before or during the hunt. They never depict animals not useful for food, nor plants, nor any inanimate things except houses. Sometimes the animals are pictured with spears or arrows in their sides. Perhaps men believed that the repetition of prayers or incantations before such pictures would enable them to kill the animals more easily. Paintings showing houses near, or even on, the animals may have been designed to draw these animals toward the camp by magic powers. The statues of women often exaggerated parts associated with sex: possibly it was believed that appropriate incantations addressed to them would bring children to the votary.

The Cro-Magnons also had religious beliefs of a sort. Like all known members of the species *Homo sapiens*, they ordinarily buried their dead in an elaborate and formal manner. The bodies were covered with red ochre, and weapons and tools were placed in the graves. Such practices indicate belief in a future life. Perhaps some of the statuettes were idols rather than fetishes (or "lucky stones"), and cave paintings sometimes show dances or rituals that may have had religious significance. Moreover, the existence of magic seems to imply the previous existence of religion: the idea of spirits and supernatural powers is fundamentally religious and is born of religious experience. The magician merely turned to powers of whose existence he had learned from religion, and used charms and incantations to constrain these powers to provide him or his clients with such material blessings as children and plentiful game.

Presently life became more difficult, and Magdalenian civilization went into decline. The climate of western Europe was growing warmer and Europe's broad grasslands were presently overgrown with forests. The herds of reindeer and bison that had once roamed the plains gradually disappeared, and the hunters thus lost their chief food supplies. Thereafter the Cro-Magnons led miserable half-starved existences that left them no time or energy for the cultivation of the higher arts of civilization, and their skills were soon forgotten. Not until several thousand years later did something better appear.

Religion

**Decline
of the
Cro-
Magnons**

2. THE NEOLITHIC AGE

*From food
finding
to food
producing*

THROUGHOUT paleolithic times men were merely hunters or food finders. Like the wild animals, they ate only what food they could find, what game they could kill, what fish they could catch, and the vegetables, fruits, and berries they found in field or forest. As there were only limited supplies of food, the number of persons who could eke out a bare existence was small, even in favorable times. It is doubtful whether all Europe produced enough such food to support 200,000 persons at any period in paleolithic times. Then came what has aptly been called the neolithic revolution. Men learned to cultivate the land and to domesticate animals. From being mere *food finders* they became *food producers*, and the consequent increase in the supply of food enabled human life and civilization to develop rapidly along new lines. Except for the invention of speech, agriculture was the most important invention ever made by man.

*Invention of
agriculture*

On several occasions in the course of human history different peoples have quite independently discovered agriculture. The Indians of Central America learned to cultivate maize and built up a whole system of agriculture around it; the Chinese did the same with rice; but the earliest discovery of agriculture came in the Near East more than five thousand years before Christ. This last center is the most important for our present study because it was from here that Europe learned the fundamentals of agriculture. Before examining this early agriculture and its social consequences, however, we must first see something of the geography of the region and its early inhabitants.

*The
"Fertile
Crescent"*

The Near East consists of those lands that lie around the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and east thereof for upward of a thousand miles to a line drawn from the Caspian Sea southward to

the Persian Gulf. It includes modern Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, and Iraq (Mesopotamia), and the western part of Iran. We are now concerned, however, only with the relatively small part of the Near East that is known as the "Fertile Crescent"—the strip of fertile land, rarely more than fifty miles broad, that lies between the Mediterranean on the west, the highlands of Armenia and Iran on the north and east, and the Arabian Desert on the south. Starting in southern Palestine, it runs north along the whole eastern end of the Mediterranean, then turns east to skirt the foothills until it reaches the Tigris River, which it follows south to the Persian Gulf. Egypt must be added at the southwestern end of this strip. The central part of the crescent is not exceptionally fertile, but the two ends, in Mesopotamia and Egypt, boast some of the richest land in the world. Here agriculture was discovered, and here in later centuries arose the world's first high civilizations.

We know that Egypt was inhabited from very early times, for fist hatchets have been found there in gravel deposited during the second interglacial period. Other evidence indicates that human occupation has probably been continuous from that day to this. Paleolithic flints have also been found at various places in the Asiatic Near East, and a dozen Neanderthal skeletons have been discovered in Palestine. Then, at the very end of the fourth glacial period, climatic changes and the great migrations of *Homo sapiens* prepared the way for higher civilization.

During the fourth glacial period the moderating and moisture-laden winds, blowing from the Atlantic, which now water western Europe, were deflected to the south by the cold air over the European ice sheets. Northern Africa therefore enjoyed a period of heavy rainfall and moderate temperature which enabled the Sahara, today a desert, to become a well-watered grassland fit for human habitation. This region was occupied by members of the species *Homo sapiens*, perhaps as early as 20,000 B.C., when it became the homeland of what we today call the Mediterranean race. As the glaciers in Europe gradually receded, the winds began to follow a more northerly course and the Sahara slowly dried into its present desert state. Somewhat after 10,000 B.C. this desiccation had advanced so far that its inhabitants were forced to emigrate and seek new homes. Some crossed to Europe, where they encountered, conquered, and absorbed, but did not exterminate, the decadent Cro-Magnons. Today their descendants form the bulk of the population of Spain, southern Italy,

**Early
inhabitants
of Egypt**

**Hamites
and Semites**

and southern France, and a notable part of that of the rest of Italy and France, southern Germany, and even of the British Isles. Other Mediterranean peoples entered Egypt and Libya and are now called Hamites. Still others crossed from Africa to Arabia by the straits at the southern end of the Red Sea. When Arabia too became a desert they migrated north into various parts of the Fertile Crescent and became the ancestors of the Semites of historic times. Still other Mediterraneans advanced along the coast to Syria and Asia Minor, whence a few found their way to Crete and Greece.

Alpines

Meantime other peoples, of quite different racial stock, were migrating from their early home in central Asia (perhaps Turkestan) for much the same reason. Their homelands too were drying up. These peoples are often called the Alpine race. Some reached Europe at an early date (well before 10,000 B.C.), and about 7000 B.C. large numbers of Alpines passed westward through southern Russia. Their descendants form the greater part of the population of central and eastern Europe today. Other members of this race turned south and occupied the mountainous territory north of the Fertile Crescent, whence they spread into Mesopotamia, Syria, and Asia Minor. In the latter regions they came in contact with various Mediterranean peoples, with whom they mingled to produce new subraces.

Nordics

At this same time a third group of peoples, the ancestors of the Nordic race, were living in northern or eastern Europe, probably in Russia. Many centuries were to elapse, however, before they played an important part in history.

The First Villages

Almost nothing is known of the cultural life of these Mediterranean and Alpine peoples before their great migrations, but their earliest traces in the Fertile Crescent show that they were then just beginning to learn something of agriculture and to live in villages. In recent years archeologists have dug up scores of these early villages in various parts of the Near East, and from them they have learned much about the beginning of neolithic times.

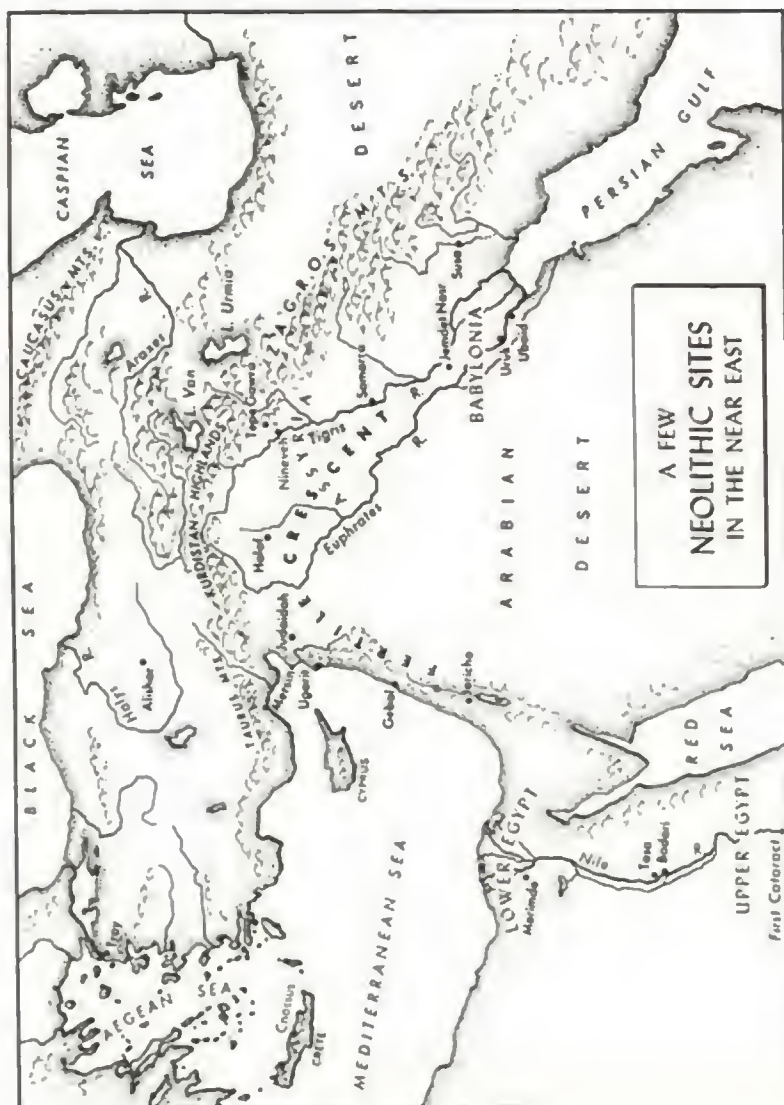
Early

Assyrian villages

The earliest of these villages, several of them discovered since World War II, are in the Assyrian hill country near the northeastern bend of the Fertile Crescent, where northeastern Iraq today meets northwestern Iran. These ancient villages apparently were built by early Alpines, and they date from a period shortly before 5000 B.C.



TELL JUDAIDAH. This picture shows the method archeologists use to trace the course of human history. This Syrian site was excavated by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago in the 1930's. The "tell" (or hill) is entirely artificial, consisting of the debris left by centuries of human occupation. The different levels shown in the picture can be dated by the objects found there; typical finds from each level are pictured in the column on the right. Thus the top level contained the ruins of a Christian church, built between A.D. 300 and 600. Level II, dating from 64 B.C. to A.D. 300, had many Roman objects, represented here by a lamp. Level III, 500-464 B.C., had Greek and Persian objects, symbolized by a coin of Alexander the Great. Level IV, dating from about 750 B.C., contained inscriptions in Hittite hieroglyphics. Level V, about 1300-1000 B.C., had pottery from the Aegean area. Level VI, about 1400 B.C., contained pottery imported from several places, showing extensive trade. Level VII, about 1800-1600 B.C., showed cultural connections with the Babylonia of Hammurabi's day. Level VIII, about 1800, showed the influence of Egypt and the Hyksos. Levels IX and X showed trade with northern Mesopotamia. Level XI, about 2500 B.C., contained a cylinder from Ur of the First Dynasty. In Level XII, about 3000 B.C., were found six copper statuettes, three male and three female, and there were traces of the cloth in which they had been wrapped; these statues of gods and goddesses of fertility are the oldest known representations in metal of the human figure. Level XIII had excellent pottery, and Level XIV, perhaps as early as 4000 B.C., was a neolithic village. (Oriental Institute)



Their inhabitants were familiar with agriculture, which apparently was still something new, for men continued hunting. In the earliest villages the primitive houses were mere pits, with floor and hearth, which presumably were covered with roofs made of skins—or perhaps of thatch or sod. Later villages in the same general region were built of brick, and had cobbled streets and large storehouses. The inhabitants of the earliest villages had good flint tools, mortars for grinding grain, and stone axes. They presently learned to make pottery as well as brick, and the later villages contain clay figurines that may have been idols.

When these Assyrian villages were in their prime, about 4500 B.C., the lower valley of the Tigris, commonly known as Babylonia, was an uninhabitable swamp. The rivers washed down great quantities of silt, however, dry land gradually arose, and toward 4000 B.C. settlers began entering the region. Some were Alpines from the north or east, others were Semites from the desert to the west. Before long these Babylonians were more highly civilized than their northern neighbors. They learned how to spin and weave, they built large boats, and they invented wheeled carts. Their pottery was so fine that authorities believe it must have been made on potters' wheels. Streets in the villages were laid out along the lines of the compass, and houses contained round arches built of brick. Toward the end of the fourth millennium (3000 B.C.), the first crude forms of writing appeared, and there were copper objects in profusion, showing that Mesopotamia was emerging from the neolithic into the Age of Metals.

*Neolithic
culture in
Babylonia*

About fifty skeletons of Mediterranean type have been discovered in an ancient cemetery in Palestine. Rude flint sickles suggest that these men had some knowledge of agriculture, but they were primarily hunters. It is not easy to date this isolated culture accurately, but it may be almost as ancient as the earliest Assyrian villages, going back to 5000 B.C. Similar very ancient neolithic cultures have been found at a few sites in Syria, and in the vicinity of Tarsus, but it is as yet impossible to trace the course of cultural development in Palestine or Syria during the next two thousand years.

*Palestine
and Syria*

We are more fortunate in Egypt, where several ancient sites have been excavated. The most ancient are at Tasa and Badari, about halfway up the Nile, and at Merimde in the Delta. The former village dates from about 4500; the latter came a few centuries later. Here too men were still hunters, but they also cultivated grain, made

Egypt

large pottery jars in which to store it, and had domesticated cattle. They knew how to make linen cloth, and they lived in permanent villages. They must have been an eminently peaceful people, for we find no warlike weapons in their graves, their skeletons show no examples of broken bones or other injuries, and a considerable proportion of those buried in their cemeteries had reached old age. Other sites show the gradual advance of civilization during the next millennium. The vine and the olive were introduced from abroad; the ass became a common beast of burden. Swamps were drained and irrigation canals were dug. Boats were built for use on the Nile: at first they were propelled by oars but, about 3500, sails were invented. By this time, too, the Egyptians could build boats strong enough to sail the Red Sea as far as Punt (modern Somaliland) and the Mediterranean to Syria.

**Neolithic
cultures
in Europe**

It thus came about that, during the fourth millennium (4000–3000 B.C.), the Fertile Crescent was dotted with villages whose inhabitants practiced agriculture and other neolithic arts. Not until the end of the millennium, however, did neolithic culture appear in Europe. Europeans probably invented much for themselves, but there can be little doubt that part of their new culture was brought from the Near East, both by invasions of peoples and by cultural borrowings—the adoption by a people of the ideas and manner of life of its neighbors. Sometimes the culture and its bearers came from Mesopotamia through Asia Minor and the Balkans; sometimes they came from Egypt across north Africa (less a desert then than now) and through Spain to France. The two streams met in Switzerland, whose famous lake villages date from about 2500, at about which time neolithic villages arose at countless other places in the Rhine and Danube valleys.

NEOLITHIC CIVILIZATION

**The domes-
tication of
animals**

The neolithic civilization of central Europe differed markedly in its details from that of Egypt or Mesopotamia, yet everywhere it was dominated by two fundamental inventions, namely, agriculture and the domestication of animals. The latter was probably the easier and the earlier. Dogs were the first animals to be domesticated. They probably had long been following the hunters' camps as scavengers, devouring food that was thrown away. Later men found the animals useful as watchdogs and tamed them by feeding them. As some early

breeds of dog resemble the jackals still found in the Near East, it is assumed that they were domesticated in that region, but other breeds may have been tamed independently elsewhere. Cattle, sheep, goats, and swine came somewhat later. It seems probable that as desiccation progressed, the animals were forced to the oases for water, and men gradually learned to save some of the animals they found there, rather than butchering all immediately. Domestication required more than saving some animals, however. It required learning to breed new animals and to care for permanent herds. Beasts of burden were likewise domesticated—the ass in Libya, the camel in south-western Asia, and the horse in Russia or western Asia. In neolithic times, as in Bible times and today, pastoral peoples in the Near East drove their flocks and herds from one pasture or oasis to another, fought with each other, and preyed upon the farming villages of the vicinity.

No one knows how agriculture was invented, but apparently the first plants to be cultivated in the Near East were barley and wheat. Neolithic Egyptians also domesticated oats, flax, peas, and other vegetables; Mesopotamians added beans, lentils, and carrots to the list. The date palm is native to Arabia and Mesopotamia, the olive to north Africa, the vine to Syria, and all were cultivated in neolithic times. The earliest farming methods were very primitive. Men poked holes in the ground with sticks and dropped in the seeds. Hoes were made by attaching flints to long sticks, but a primitive plow did not appear until about 3000 B.C. Grain was harvested with sickles made by fastening small flints to curved sticks. In these semiarid regions crops cannot be grown without irrigation, but fortunately the rivers of Egypt and Mesopotamia overflow their banks every year, thereby providing natural irrigation. Even in neolithic times, however, men had learned to spread the life-giving water over wider areas by artificial means.

**Neolithic
agriculture**

The primitive hunters were constantly moving from place to place in their pursuit of game, pastoral peoples wandered from one pasture to another, but farmers were forced to lead sedentary lives. After planting the seed, they had to wait several months for a crop, which they then stored as food and seed for the coming year. They therefore ceased their wanderings and dwelt in permanent villages instead. These small villages were generally located on the tops of hills for health and protection, with the farmers walking out to their nearby fields every day. Houses were mere huts built of sun-dried brick,

**Sedentary
life**

though sometimes they rested on stone foundations. Other edifices served as granaries, temples, or other public buildings.

**Pottery,
textiles,
carpentry**

Settled life encouraged the accumulation of tangible property, such as would have been a hindrance to wandering hunters. Neolithic times therefore brought great advance in the manufacturing arts. One early invention was pottery, which could be used to hold or carry water or for storing grain. The first pottery was sun-dried, but kilns were presently constructed, and still later men learned to paint their jars and vases. The potter's wheel, which first appeared in Mesopotamia about 3000, enabled potters to make cups and vases of amazing thinness. Neolithic men also learned to spin wool and flax and to weave it into cloth. New forms of stone tools were devised, and men found that they could get a sharper edge on flints by grinding them instead of chipping them as in paleolithic times. A characteristic tool of the neolithic period was the "celt," a stone ax large and sharp enough to cut down trees and work up lumber. The wide prevalence of celts shows the great advance being made by carpentry. As trees were scarce in Egypt and Mesopotamia, lumber was used sparingly, usually for furniture and other small objects; but in heavily forested Europe neolithic men built large wooden houses. Before the end of the fourth millennium men had also learned to use a few metals. At first they merely found bits of free gold or copper, which they hammered into shape as jewelry, but presently they learned to recognize copper ores, to smelt them, and even to cast small objects. Toward the end of the fourth millennium these skills became sufficiently widespread to herald a new age in cultural history—the Age of Metals.

Neolithic Social Institutions

**Social
organiza-
tion**

The greatly increased food supply brought by the new agriculture made possible a steady growth of population in the Near East and Europe. Increasing population in turn led to a much more complex organization of society than had prevailed before, and more elaborate political institutions were thus rendered necessary.

Patriarchate

The early pastoral peoples, especially the Semites, had a form of social organization which we call the "patriarchate." An old man, roughly corresponding to the Biblical Abraham or a modern Arab sheik, ruled over his wives and children as well as his servants and retainers and their children. As it had been discovered by this time that men as well as animals can be domesticated, the patriarch also

had his slaves. The members of such a group resembled an enormous family as they wandered about with their flocks and herds, and in a sense the patriarch might be called the father of them all. While some men undoubtedly owned small portable objects individually, the important property, namely, the flocks and herds, was held in common. The patriarch might say that the animals were his, but in reality they belonged to the whole group, which cared for them, defended them, and derived its sustenance from them. This expanded family was therefore a social, economic, and political unit.

Sometimes agricultural societies developed a parallel form of social organization known as the "matriarchate." Though it passed away in the Near East long before the beginning of historic times, the matriarchate left traces sufficient to prove that it had once been powerful there. Its distinguishing characteristic lies in the fact that under it descent is traced, not through the father, but through the mother. The ruler of the group was a husband or son of the "queen." These early agricultural societies also developed a simple form of communism somewhat resembling that of the patriarchal herdsmen. Individuals might acquire private property in movables, and perhaps even in houses, but not in agricultural land. The fields were held in common by the whole group. All the peasants worked side by side when sowing and reaping, and the crop was stored for the whole community in public granaries.

**Matri-
archate**

At a later period, but long before the end of neolithic times, the matriarchate was replaced by a revised patriarchate, perhaps because of conquest by pastoral nomads. Under the new patriarchal system the peasants continued to do the agricultural work as before, but they were forced to surrender a part of the crop to their new rulers. The conquerors, on the other hand, rendered various services to the community, notably protection against other marauders. Since they now had the wealth to pay for better things, they encouraged further advance in technology by inspiring the potters and other craftsmen to improve their wares. It was also these rulers who assembled the surplus produce that was subsequently invested in irrigation canals and other public works. They were the "capitalists" of the community.

**Conquerors
as rulers**

Folklore and Religion

Neolithic times also witnessed a great quickening of the intellectual life. Settled life led to the accumulation not only of material

**Stories and
legends**

things but also of ideas. Hunters and herdsmen told each other stories, no doubt, but when groups of men lived for many generations in a small locality, they learned to know its characteristics and its history with an intimacy that would have been impossible for hunters ever moving onward in the pursuit of game. Hills and rocks and giant trees became associated with stories and legends that were passed on from generation to generation, and this folklore became an integral part of the life of the village.

**Intellectual
life**

If we may judge these early legends by the vestiges that remained into literary times, they contained lore of many sorts—theories as to the origin of the world and man, the history of man and his cultural progress, and stories of the inspiring deeds performed by heroes of old. They played the part in neolithic society that popular science and history play in modern times. Of course the legends were not true, yet the men who told them, and those who heard them, believed them and based their conduct upon them as much as we base our actions upon our corresponding beliefs and folklore. The village whose inhabitants shared legends of this sort was bound together not merely by economic and political ties: it became an intellectual community as well. In the long run, the creation of such communities, built upon a heritage of common ideas, was as important as was the creation of economic and political groups.

**Religious
beliefs and
festivals**

Finally, the neolithic period witnessed great religious development. We have already seen how paleolithic men believed in supernatural powers and human immortality, and how they went through various ritual practices in conformity with these beliefs. Such views regarding the supernatural were greatly elaborated by neolithic peasants. Familiar spots were associated with spirits, sacred places and oracles became famed far and wide, and great religious ceremonies attracted people from the whole surrounding countryside. These festivals usually coincided with the important seasons of the agricultural year—planting, the first fruits, and the harvest—and from very ancient times men regarded the reappearance of vegetation in the spring as symbolic of human immortality, which they celebrated with appropriate rites at our Easter season.

Priests

During this neolithic period there developed an elaborate priesthood whose duty it was to see that religious ceremonies were properly performed and to keep the spirits and gods propitious. When sacrifices and offerings were made to the gods, it was the priests who

actually received them and subsequently looked after the gods' property. The priests thus became a wealthy caste. As their duties also included the explanation of the world to men, they became theologians, scholars, and even scientists after a fashion. They formed the first intellectual class, and their wealth and knowledge gave them the power to become the most influential group in the community. More than anyone else it was they who bound communities together by intellectual bonds as well as economic and political ones.

Elaborate theologies and mythologies were constructed to explain the various religious ceremonies and to set forth the attributes of the supernatural powers. Many gods were worshiped and, as was fitting to matriarchal agricultural peoples, the greatest of all the gods was usually some form of Mother Earth, who gave life to her children. The worship of this Great Mother spread over the whole Near East in neolithic times. Statuettes representing her are often found by archeologists, and occasionally these neolithic figurines represent Mother and Child—a theme widely used in later religious art.

**Mother
Earth**

The patriarchal pastoral peoples, on the other hand, ordinarily pictured supernatural powers somewhat differently. Nomads were less inclined to think of their gods as inhabiting specific places and were therefore less likely to build altars and temples for them, to construct elaborate mythologies about them, or to make statues of them. Though they carried lucky stones and fetishes about, they generally tended to associate the supernatural powers with the sky, the heavenly bodies, and other phenomena which were always with them in their wanderings. Thus the stars, the planets (especially Ishtar, our Venus), the sun (Shamash), and the moon (Sin, whence Mount Sinai, the "moon mountain") played prominent parts in the religion of early Semitic nomads. The early Nordics, on the other hand, worshiped a sky god who was called *Dyus pitar* in Sanskrit (a language of early India), *Zeus pater* in Greek, *Jupiter* in Latin, and *Tiu* in old German: under the latter name he is still honored on the third day of our week. Thus while agricultural and matriarchal peasants were addressing their supplications to Mother Earth, the pastoral and patriarchal nomads worshiped the Sky Father. Many of the fundamental religious ideas of the Mediterranean world in classical times can be traced back to the worship and mythology which grew out of the commingling of these two neolithic types of deity.

**The Sky
Father**

RACE AND CULTURE

The
"white
race"

In this chapter we have often used the word *race* and we have referred to such racial groups as Mediterraneans, Alpines, and Nordics. These men invaded the Near East and Europe in late paleolithic or early neolithic times, conquering the earlier inhabitants (Cro-Magnons and many others) and setting themselves up as ruling aristocracies wherever they went. Nevertheless, they also amalgamated with the peoples whom they conquered, and their descendants form the so-called "white race." As recent years have heard much loose and indiscriminate talk upon the subject of race, it will be well to get straight in our minds once and for all exactly what a "race" really is, and more especially what it is not.

Non-
existence of
pure race

Race is a purely biological matter. A race is a large, and perhaps widely scattered, group of human beings whose common descent is shown by hereditary physical characteristics that are transmitted from generation to generation. Though color is one of these characteristics, it is by no means the only one, and while the white peoples of Europe differ racially from the Mongols of eastern Asia and the Negroes of central Africa, members of the white races also differ widely among themselves. Moreover, small groups of men have been wandering about for thousands of years, interbreeding with the other groups whom they met. Even in early times slave traders carried individuals away from their kinsmen; traders and artisans migrated freely from tribe to tribe; and marauding chieftains seldom inquired regarding the race of adventurous young warriors seeking to join their bands. Throughout history there has been a constant commingling of races. Men of "pure" race exist nowhere upon earth today—and they never have. The most that we can say is that a certain individual approaches one type or another, and in Europe these types are called Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean.

Race and
culture

Race, being a biological matter, has no inherent relation to culture. A man's race is determined before his birth, his culture afterward. A child kidnaped at birth, for example, would retain the racial characteristics of his parents but would acquire the culture of the people among whom he was raised. It is true, nevertheless, that in early times the members of a race tended to share the same culture, and that sudden extensive changes in the culture of a locality usually indicate invasion by a new people. This superficial parallelism of race

and culture is due to the fact that, as we have seen, individuals acquire their culture by education, ordinarily from their parents or other persons of their "culture group." Even in early times, however, one type of culture was often shared by members of different races, and much of the present volume will be devoted to the story of how cultures have spread beyond racial frontiers, of how one people has absorbed, modified, and developed the culture of another.

Race likewise has nothing to do with nationality. A glance at the map will show that the nations of modern Europe cut squarely across racial frontiers—in so far as such frontiers may be said to exist at all. North Germans are largely of the Nordic type, south Germans Alpine; north Italians are largely Alpine, south Italians Mediterranean. Many modern Frenchmen are Alpine, and therefore related to south Germans, north Italians, and Slavs; but in northern France there are many Nordics whose racial affiliations are with north Germany and England, and in southern France there are many Mediterraneans more closely related by blood to south Italians and Spaniards, and even to Algerians, than they are to most Frenchmen of central and northern France. There is no such thing as a French or German, a Greek or Latin, or a Jewish race, and members of almost every race under heaven share in American nationality.

*Race and
nationality*

Nineteenth-century writers often laid great emphasis upon the languages spoken by various peoples as indications of race. Since language is merely one element of culture, it cannot properly be used for such a purpose. The Negroes in the United States, for example, speak English as their mother tongue. Enthusiastic philologists and politicians who tried to deduce racial history from linguistic history thus fell into many grave errors. Nevertheless, it is true that once the general outlines of racial and cultural prehistory have been established by the sounder methods of anthropology and archeology, philology can profitably be used to supply further details regarding the life and culture of a prehistoric people. It will therefore be worth our while briefly to trace the early linguistic history of the Near East and Europe.

*Race and
language*

Neolithic Languages

Neolithic times provide us with our earliest evidence, direct and indirect, of what the languages spoken by men were like. It is useless to speculate upon the character of paleolithic communication, but

*Written
languages*

the invention of writing, which came at the end of the neolithic period, has preserved for us records of several neolithic languages. Moreover, the comparative method has enabled modern linguists to learn much about languages that never were committed to writing or of which we have only scanty written records.

**Europe's
linguistic
families**

No connection can be shown between the different languages spoken by the major subdivisions of mankind: perhaps members of the species *Homo sapiens* had not yet developed anything that could properly be called a language at the time of their dispersion. Most of the languages spoken in Europe and the Near East throughout historic times can, however, be divided into two great families which can be associated respectively with the Mediterraneans who came from Africa and with the Nordics and Alpines of Europe.

**Mediterranean
languages**

The languages of Mediterranean origin fall into several groups, two of which contain languages that are still spoken. They are called "Hamitic" and "Semitic" after the two Mediterranean subraces that spoke them in neolithic times. The Hamitic languages include ancient Egyptian and its successors; the Libyan and Berber languages spoken today in parts of North Africa; and several groups of languages spoken in central Africa and Somaliland. The Semitic languages were spoken by the peoples who came out of Arabia. They include Akkadian (Babylonian) and Assyrian, Phoenician, Aramaic, and Hebrew, and the Arabic now spoken throughout the Near East and North Africa. The languages originally spoken by the Mediterranean peoples of southern and western Europe presumably were akin to Hamitic and Semitic, but unfortunately we know nothing about them.

**Indo-European
languages**

The second great group of languages, commonly called "Indo-European" or "Aryan," included most languages spoken in Europe today as well as several Asiatic ones. These languages fall into two great subdivisions. The Eastern group includes, among others, Sanskrit, which appeared in India before 1500 B.C., and survives in various dialects; Persian, which was introduced into Iran at about the same time by a kindred people; the various Slavic tongues, ancient and modern (Old Slavic, Russian, Polish, Czech, Serb, Bulgar, etc.); and modern Armenian. Sanskrit was forced upon a people of Dravidian (Indian) race, the others upon persons largely of Alpine race, and Nordic blood is virtually nonexistent among the peoples now speaking these Eastern languages. The Western group, too, is made up of several subdivisions: Hittite, which was spoken in central Asia Minor in the second millennium before Christ; Greek,

including ancient and modern dialects; Latin, including the various Italian dialects as well as its descendants, the modern Romance languages, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Romanian; Celtic, spoken in western Europe and the British Isles for many centuries after the political decline of the Mediterraneans there, but now limited to Irish, Welsh, and Breton; and lastly the Germanic languages, including various ancient tongues such as Gothic and Anglo-Saxon, and modern German, Scandinavian, Dutch, and English.

Alleged Racial Qualities

Much has been written in recent years about the merits and shortcomings of various races. It is theoretically possible, of course, that the talents and abilities of whole peoples may vary somewhat as do those of individuals. It is true that certain races—notably those native to central Africa, Australia, and Polynesia—have not as yet built up high civilizations of their own, but who can say whether this backwardness is due to incapacity or to environment? Most races have shown great creative powers. The accomplishments of the Mayas, Aztecs, and Incas in pre-Columbian America were amazing. The Chinese developed a civilization as high as any in Europe until a century and a half ago. The achievements of the Dravidians in India astonished Alexander the Great and the British of the eighteenth century. Our own American civilization is the joint creation of Nordics, Alpines, and Mediterraneans, of Negroes and Mongols. In the course of this book it will appear that high civilizations have arisen most frequently in regions where there has been cross-fertilization of race and culture.

Great quantities of ink have also been sacrificed to a discussion of the psychological and spiritual qualities of races, and especially those of the European races. Most of what has been written is pure moonshine. In general, persons who think of themselves as belonging to a certain race are apt to claim for that race a monopoly upon physical beauty, spiritual idealism, creative ability, and true civilization, while they accuse the members of all other races of ugliness, materialism, laziness, and barbarism. Nordic champions have been conspicuously vocal of late years, growing lyrical about their universal genius and their superiority over all their rivals. Unfortunately, however, other writers have been so unkind as to picture this magnificent

**Merits and
demerits of
the races**

**The "Nordic
myth"**

race as composed largely of wandering drunkards and fighters who have taken from others whatever civilization they possess! It may be true that the Nordics and Mediterraneans have been more bellicose than the Alpines; they have also produced more great builders and explorers. But it is also worth noting that while Alpines may sometimes show a willingness to accept their lot as sedentary peasants, many of them have been distinguished as philosophers, poets, musicians, and artists. An exceptional number of the great religious leaders revered by the Western world have been men of Mediterranean race. No race has a monopoly on barbarism or culture.

Hammurabi's Code (*Oriental Institute*)



THE ANCIENT ORIENT

NEW WAYS OF LIFE—THE SUMERIANS—
ANCIENT EGYPT—THE HEIRS OF EGYPT—
THE HEBREWS

Dates B.C.	Egypt	Mesopotamia	Palestine	Asia Minor	Iran	Indus Valley	Europe
5000— 4000			Neolithic				Mesolithic
3500— 3000	Predynastic	Coming of the Sumerians	Copper Age				
3100	Menes						Early Minoan
2750— 2500	Pyramid Age						Swiss lake villages
2250— 2000		First dynasty of Ur				Mohenjo- Daro	
2000— 1750	Twelfth dynasty	Third dynasty of Ur	Bronze Age	Hitite invasions			Middle Minoan
1750— 1580	Hyksos	Hammurabi	Canaanites				Achaean invasions
1580— 1320	Eighteenth dynasty	Hitite raid	Egyptian rule	Second Hit- tite Empire	Aryans	Aryans	Stonehenge Late Minoan
							Mycenae
1320— 1200	Nineteenth dynasty		Iron Age	Fall of Troy		Vedic Age	Dorians
1000— 800	Foreign rule		Hebrew invasions David Soloman				
800— 600		Assyrian Empire	Hebrew Prophets		Medes		
600— 330		Chaldean Empire	Exile Return		Zoroaster		
334— 323					Persian Empire		Persian Wars Alexander the Great

3. NEW WAYS OF LIFE

NEOLITHIC life progressed gradually through the fourth millennium until about 3200 B.C., when men suddenly began creating new and more complex civilizations. From whatever point of view we regard the centuries following this date, we find a new spirit and a new way of life. Historians who are primarily archeologists note the rapid multiplication of metal tools and speak of the Bronze Age, or of the Age of Metals; those who think as sociologists emphasize the commercial and urban life which then began to supplement and transform the agrarian life characteristic of the neolithic village; economists are impressed by the sudden flowering of a capitalist economy; political historians find here the earliest military and bureaucratic states; and still other students of the period take the invention of writing as marking the beginning of "historic times." In the final analysis, all these innovations presupposed an increasing population and an abundant food supply such as only the rich valleys of the Nile and Tigris-Euphrates rivers could then provide, and, then as always, improved agriculture was necessary before significant expansion could be made in other fields of human endeavor. We must therefore begin our account of this new civilization with a survey of the new agricultural progress.

*Beginning
of a new
age*

The invention of the plow, late in neolithic times, greatly extended the amount of land that one man could till, and at about the same time artificial irrigation brought large new tracts under cultivation. Agricultural production therefore began to increase more rapidly than the farming population, and there arose a surplus of food which went to feed artisans and merchants. Being thus freed from the daily necessity of producing their own food, these men could devote a greater portion of their time, intelligence, and energy to

*Results of
agricultural
progress*

practicing and developing their trades. Technological advance became more rapid; copper was hardened by mixing it with tin, and better tools and weapons became possible. When the economic life of communities became more diversified, cities appeared that were not merely big villages. Their citizens were artisans and traders while the villages continued to be inhabited by farmers.

**The first
capitalists**

An especially important feature of the changes coming at this time was the rise of a capitalist economy. Even at this early date, capitalism was by no means new, for men had long since learned to invest labor and wealth in productive enterprises. When a paleolithic man spent days or even weeks chipping a stone fist hatchet which he later turned to productive uses, he was of course creating capital. Now, however, the increased production of goods of many sorts gave capital a new and more essential place in the economic life of the community. This capital took many forms: it might consist of houses or improvements upon land, irrigation works, boats or beasts of burden, stocks of raw materials, finished products as yet unsold to the ultimate consumer, or supplies of food to sustain artisans and traders during the time required for the manufacture and sale of commodities. In a sense, this capital was the creation of the whole community, of course, but in the long run its control inevitably fell to a few individuals skillful at coördinating the activities of others and at using capital to augment production still further. In some places these capitalists were kings; in others they were priests.

**Royal and
priestly
capitalists**

The royal capitalists presumably began as warriors wise enough to convert a part of their booty into capital; the early priests, on the other hand, derived their capital from offerings to the gods which had been entrusted to their care. These early capitalists then discovered ways to augment their wealth by shrewd investment. Sometimes they lent cattle to peasants, retaining ownership not only of the beasts themselves but also of their offspring. Speculative modern writers have even suggested, with high plausibility, that the calf probably was taken back by the owner soon after birth and thus became the first form of interest. Grain might be lent as seed and taken back with interest after the harvest. Even when inanimate things were lent, similar payments could be demanded year by year. On other occasions accumulated wealth was used to construct irrigation works, thus bringing under cultivation new land later claimed by the capitalists as theirs. Other lands were acquired because of debts which an unhappy borrower could not repay. Superior educa-

tion and ability then enabled the capitalists to use the land more intelligently and efficiently than ignorant peasants formerly had, and the total production of the community increased steadily.

Sometimes, too, these early capitalists invested their capital in enterprises of a business nature. They made loans to traders, charging interest for the service, and by granting or withholding loans they could deeply influence the economic development of the whole community. Traders often found good markets in the vicinity of famous temples or other public buildings; valuables might be stored more safely in their sacred precincts; and public officials became businessmen themselves while caring for the property of their king or god. Royal or priestly capitalists thus gradually came to dominate economic life.

**Capitalism
and
commerce**

This new economic system raised problems which brought demands for stronger and more elaborate governments. Wandering bedouin, their covetousness aroused by the wealth of the traders, often turned brigand to rob caravans or raid cities. Kings were then forced to provide protection against such attacks. The irrigation system of a large area could best be operated as a unit, and only a strong central authority could settle the numerous controversies that arose about the use of water. The kings served as judges to settle the disputes between traders, and drew up law codes covering the legal aspects of commercial life. Stronger governments therefore became necessary.

**Stronger
govern-
ments
needed**

This new economic organization was very likely to raise class conflicts between farmers and city dwellers since the former produced the food which the latter must receive regularly and in ever increasing quantities. Sometimes the food was bought—or rather, obtained by barter—but this method of exchange proved inadequate, for the cities never provided enough tangible goods desired by the peasants to pay for all the food they required. Further deliveries of food were therefore exacted by force. It should not be assumed, however, that the farmers were simply robbed. They actually received various intangible benefits in exchange, and a modern accountant would probably charge many of their payments to rent, taxes, insurance for protection, gifts to the gods, and the like. But here, as always, force was often necessary to make the system work. This force was supplied by the central governments, which had by now developed powerful military and bureaucratic organizations. By a strange irony, therefore, civilization and militarism progressed hand in hand.

**Village
vs. city**

4. THE SUMERIANS

**Who were
the
Sumerians?**

THE line separating neolithic from higher civilization was first crossed in Babylonia, or lower Mesopotamia, where the pioneers were a people known as the Sumerians. Whence these Sumerians came is unknown, and their language shows no kinship with any other known tongue. They settled in Babylonia long before 3300, however, and for more than a thousand years thereafter they dominated the region politically. Their cultural influence spread throughout the Near East, and it long survived their political domination. In fact, everyone in the European culture group still does many things in ways that were learned ultimately from the Sumerians.

**The land
of Sumer**

As pointed out in the preceding chapter, the land of Sumer (the southernmost or lowest part of the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers) is built of silt washed by these rivers from the mountains to the north. Before 4000 B.C. the region was largely uninhabitable because of swamps, and as recently as 3000 B.C. the head of the Persian Gulf stood at least seventy-five miles above its present location. The gulf has since been filling in at the rate of about a mile and a half a century or an average of seventy-five feet a year, though the advance has been irregular. Islands arose in the midst of the swamps and further deposits of alluvial mud gradually expanded them to form broad plains.

**The rise of
city-states**

This geologic history determined much of Babylonia's political history. Soon after the islands rose out of the water, men occupied them, built villages upon them, developed political life, and eventually created tiny independent states. As the islands grew larger and trade developed, cities arose at favorable spots, and the inhabitants of these cities presently came to dominate all the villages on the island. Thus appeared a type of political organization, known as the



"city-state," in which each city was independent of all others but ruled over the farms and villages for several miles around. When the islands were finally united by silt to form the present Babylonian plain, the cities remained independent and Babylonia was covered with small city-states—Eridu, Ur, Uruk, Nippur, Kish, Lagash, Babylon, and many others. They often quarreled with each other, but local patriotism in each was so strong that none could dominate its neighbors for long. Political unity therefore came to Babylonia very slowly.

Archeology shows the steady advance of civilization in Babylonia during the first half of the third millennium (3000–2500 B.C.) and makes clear the cultural supremacy now of one city, now of another. Whether this cultural leadership brought with it some form of political leadership we cannot say. About 2500, however, the city of Ur produced a line of kings concerning whom we are better informed. Said to have reigned 177 years in all, they made up the so-called

*The First
Dynasty
of Ur*

First Dynasty of Ur, and the five hundred years preceding them are known as the "Early Dynastic Period." These kings built the Royal Tombs of Ur, whose wealth of gold and gems attracted wide attention when they were unearthed in the 1920's. Inscriptions show that they claimed dominion over other Babylonian cities such as Kish and Nippur, each of which is a hundred miles away.

**Lugal-
zaggisi
of Uruk**

After the fall of the First Dynasty of Ur, various cities strove for leadership until about 2275, when a certain Lugal-zaggisi of Uruk made himself master of a great part of Babylonia. His grandiloquent inscriptions inform us that his favorite god had invested him with the "domination of the world . . . from the rising to the setting sun," and that his conquests extended from "the Lower Sea [the Persian Gulf] across the Tigris and Euphrates to the Upper Sea [the Mediterranean]." We may doubt whether Lugal-zaggisi ruled over all this vast territory at any one time, but it is certain that Sumerian culture had by this time spread over the wide territories he claimed. Sumerian traders were traveling even farther afield, and it would not be surprising if the great king's raids reached from sea to sea.

**Sargon and
Semitic
supremacy**

During this period of almost a thousand years, men of Sumerian race dominated Babylonia culturally and politically. Nevertheless small groups of Semites were constantly filtering into the country from the Arabian Desert to the west. Their level of culture was far below that of the Sumerians, and apparently the newcomers attracted little attention and at first aroused small hostility. Presently, however, the Semites learned the ways of civilization from their Sumerian betters and became the most numerous and powerful portion of the population in northern Babylonia (Akkad). About 2264 a Semitic chieftain of Agade, named Sargon, defeated and killed Lugal-zaggisi. Sargon, his two sons, and his grandson then ruled the whole of Babylonia for a hundred years, expanding greatly upon Lugal-zaggisi's raids to the east and west. Something went wrong, however, and the Semitic kings could not continue the civilizing work of their Sumerian predecessors. Civilization declined in Babylonia, and eventually the people could not even defend themselves against foreign invaders. Barbarians from the east swarmed over the land, plundering and destroying, and cultural darkness prevailed for a hundred years (about 2160-2060).

Hammurabi

The kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur (now dated about 2053 to 1944), after driving out the invaders with new bronze weapons, ushered in a revival which brought Sumerian civilization to its

highest level. The empire of Ur now extended west to the Mediterranean, while Sumerian traders reached central Asia Minor and Palestine in the west and the Indus Valley far to the east. Before long, however, a new Semitic dynasty, originating in Babylon, had overthrown the Sumerians once more and ruled all Babylonia. The sixth king of this dynasty was Hammurabi (1728-1686),¹ the best known of the ancient rulers of Mesopotamia. After him, decline set in once more, Babylonia was again overrun from the east, and little is known of her political and cultural history during the next eight or nine centuries.

Sumerian Civilization

A striking characteristic of Sumerian civilization, especially in early times, may be seen in the power and importance of the priests. The rulers of the land were priests, and the chief priest of the city, called the *patesi*, professed to rule in the name of the local god. Theoretically the god owned the land and much of the productive capital of the community; his temples were the most imposing buildings in the city; and each temple had a large staff of officials who busied themselves caring for his property, and who, in so doing, actually governed the city and directed its economic life. The early Sumerian city-states were theocracies—that is to say, states governed by gods through priests.

**Sumerian
theocracy**

In later times, military officials superseded the priests to a considerable extent, but the transition to secular government was very gradual, and for many centuries the old *patesi* continued to look after local matters. Not until the days of Hammurabi did royal officials clearly assert their complete supremacy, and the idea of theocracy did not die even then. The kings insisted that they were agents of the gods just as truly as the priests had ever been, and they attributed their exalted position to divine favor. In succeeding centuries many traces of the old Sumerian theocracy remained, both in Babylonia and throughout the Near East. Kings professed to rule as agents of the

**Priests
superseded
by kings**

¹ Dates varying by five hundred years have been given for this great king. Quite recently, however, scholars have settled upon the date given above as the most likely. All other dates in early Babylonian history are computed from this fixed date, with Babylonian king lists serving as guides. Certainly regarding the chronology of other early oriental states is equally impossible. In general, the dates in this chapter before 2000 are subject to a rectification of fifty years, those between 2000 and 1000 to one of ten or fifteen years.









































gods, and priests claimed the right to reprove the kings or even to overthrow them in the name of the same gods. Theocratic ideas seeped into the late Roman Empire from the Orient, and in western Europe during the Middle Ages priests often asserted their right to rule.

**Priests as
intellectual
leaders**

The Sumerian priests did more than merely govern their city-states for their wealth allowed them leisure for other activities that were less immediately remunerative. Some priests concerned themselves with religious rites and ceremonies, others were busy with political administration or economic activity, but still others devoted themselves to theological and philosophical speculation, to scholarship, or even to scientific research. These priests made up the world's first intellectual class, and because of them the whole intellectual life of Sumeria centered around theological problems and was deeply tinged with theocratic colors.

**Cuneiform
writing**

Writing first appeared in Babylonia with the early Sumerians. A cheap and practical writing material was found in small clay tablets, about the size of the palm of the hand, which were marked with a reed while still soft and afterward baked or dried in the sun. At first the marks were mere picture writing, but they soon took on a more conventional form. The pictures were simplified and standardized, and marks of new sorts were invented. Some marks retained their old character and simply signified the thing pictured; others stood only for the sound of the word, and several such signs might be combined to write a long word that stood for something whose picture could not be drawn. (Thus, in English, a picture of a bee followed by one of a leaf might stand for the word "belief.") Before 3000 B.C. the Sumerians had learned to write all the words in their language, even including proper names, with about four hundred of these signs or characters. A thousand years later, in the days of the Third Dynasty of Ur, Sumerian writing reached its highest development, and this form of writing was used for religious texts and other important documents until a century or two before Christ. Meantime the Semites had adapted the Sumerian signs to their own very different language, using each character to represent the same sound, as in Sumerian, regardless of its original pictorial meaning. During the next several centuries, many other Near Eastern languages were written with these same characters. This type of writing is now called "cuneiform" because the lines pressed in the clay were wedge-shaped and the Latin word for "wedge" is *cuneus*.

	A	B	C	D	E
	Original pictograph	Pictograph in position of later cuneiform	Early Babylonian	Assyrian	Original or derived meaning
1					bird
2					fish
3					donkey
4					ox
5					sun day
6					grain
7					orchard
8					to plow to till
9					boomerang to throw to throw down
10					to stand to go

BABYLONIAN CHARACTERS. This diagram shows pictorially the origins of ten cuneiform signs. (J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Times*, Ginn and Company, 1916)



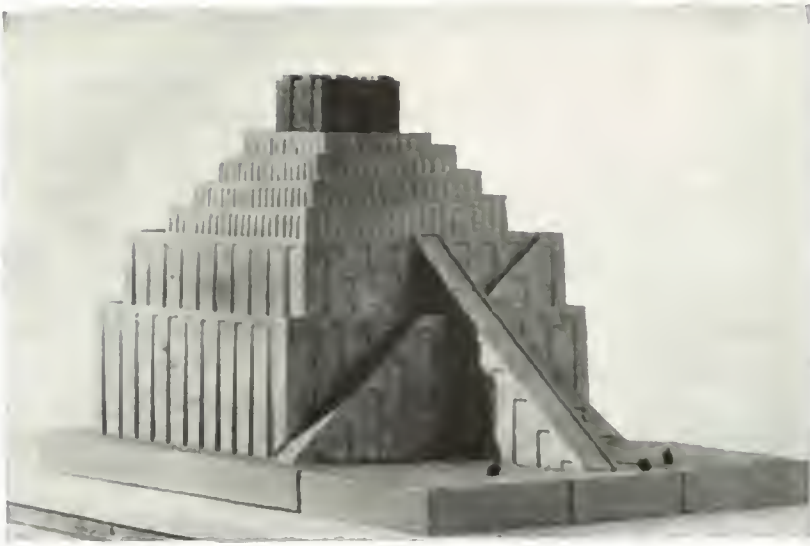
BABYLONIAN WRITING. An ancient cuneiform tablet and a stylus, held in the correct position for writing. (Oriental Institute)

**Sumerian
arithmetic**

The Sumerians had a strange way of counting. Most peoples use the decimal system, that is to say, they take ten as a base in counting and make each subsequent basic number (ten, hundred, thousand, etc.) ten times its predecessor: in the final analysis, this system is due to the fact that men first counted on their ten fingers. The Sumerians, for some reason, used a sexagesimal system, making ten the first basic number, sixty the second, six hundred the third, thirty-six hundred the fourth, and so on, with alternate multiplications by ten and six. We still use the Sumerian system when we count sixty minutes to the hour and in a few other cases. The Sumerians had no trouble with ordinary problems in arithmetic, but they knew little of geometry and the higher forms of mathematics.

**Sumerian
calendar**

The Sumerian calendar was based on the moon, with a month the time in which the moon goes through its phases (about 29½ days) while a year consisted of twelve lunar months. The Sumerian year of 354 days harmonized badly with the solar year of approximately 365½ days, but it is still used in the Mohammedan lands of the Near East. The month was divided into four weeks of seven or eight days each, and the days of the week were named after the heavenly bodies



ZIGGURAT. Lofty towers, like this reconstruction, were very common in ancient Babylonia, with some of them 30 or 40 feet high. At the top of this ziggurat was a temple to Marduk, the chief god of Babylon. Structures such as this presumably suggested the biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9) by which men hoped to force their way into heaven. Perhaps the long flight of steps by which the priests ascended to the temple suggested Jacob's dream (Gen. 28:10-15) in which he saw steps going up to heaven with angels ascending and descending them. (*Oriental Institute*)

—the same ones we use today, Sunday, Monday, etc. Day and night each were divided into six "hours"—two of our hours. Standard weights and measures were also invented. The *mina*, made up of sixty *shekels*, weighed slightly more than our pound, and sixty minas made one *talent*.

Sumerian Religion

Religion of course played a tremendous part in the life of the Sumerian theocracies. The most conspicuous building in a city was the ziggurat—a high artificial hill on top of which stood a temple reached by long flights of steps. Many scholars believe that these ziggurats were the model upon which were based the Biblical legend of the Tower of Babel and perhaps also that of Jacob's dream of a ladder reaching up to heaven. Gods varied from city to city, each city having its own deity, but all worshipers recognized the existence of other gods than their own, and as men's horizons were broadened by the economic and political unification of Babylonia the various deities

**Sumerian
and Semitic
gods**

were gradually united in one family system. The coming of the Semites brought new deities who were eventually identified with the old Sumerian gods. The myths and legends concerning the two sets of gods were amalgamated, and the worship of each assumed new forms. At the same time countless lesser spirits stood closer to the common man than the great gods could, and they helped him in his everyday affairs if properly invoked or cajoled.

**Ishtar and
Tammuz**

Especial interest attaches to the myth and worship of Ishtar and Tammuz. Ishtar was an old neolithic fertility goddess, often identified with Mother Earth, while Tammuz, her son or perhaps her lover, was associated with vegetation. The myth told of his violent death, of the sorrowing of Ishtar, and of his resurrection. Worshipers mourned with Ishtar when he died, but their mourning turned to joy when it was spectacularly announced that the god had risen from the dead. This myth of the dying and rising god was an allegory of the yearly death and resurrection of vegetation, and it raised hopes that the god would confer immortality upon those who worshiped him. The cult spread throughout the Near East (with Ishtar sometimes appearing as Astarte or Ashtoreth) while close parallels are to be seen in the myths of Cybele and Attis in Asia Minor and of Demeter and Persephone in Greece. The Romans identified Ishtar with Venus, Tammuz with Adonis, and the myth has been retold by countless poets from Ovid to Shakespeare.

**Omens and
prophecies**

Sumerian religion also paid great attention to the omens and prophecies by which the gods made their will known to men. There were innumerable ways in which this knowledge might be communicated. Dreams were considered very important; the entrails, especially the livers, of sacrificed animals received careful study; inspired men were believed to speak with the voice of a god. As the gods were commonly associated with the heavenly bodies, it was natural that unusual astronomical happenings, such as eclipses, should be deemed significant and carefully recorded. Out of these observations grew the science of astronomy as well as the pseudo science of astrology, whose practitioners still claim to predict the future from the stars. Closely associated with these practices was the magic which played a tremendous part in Babylonian life. It was universally believed that sickness and other misfortunes were caused by evil spirits, against which hundreds of charms and incantations were used. Matters of everyday life such as plowing, planting, building a house, or casting metal were accompanied by elaborate rigmaroles to insure their

success. All primitive peoples behave this way, but the Babylonians reduced their magic to a system and became the foremost magicians of antiquity. Even in Roman times magicians and astrologers of every sort were called "Babylonians" or "Chaldeans."

The Sumerians undoubtedly had a wealth of legends, stories, and epics, which they passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, but their methods of writing made it difficult to record long literary works. The average clay tablet could not hold one page of a modern printed book, and it was not easy to keep more than a few tablets together and in order as the separate "volumes" of one poem. In general, therefore, the Sumerian literature we possess consists of short pieces. Moreover, as writing was a monopoly of the priests, written literature was largely of religious interest. The most common form of poetry consisted of hymns and prayers, but other longer poems told how the gods created the earth and man or how certain religious cults were established. The longest and most famous of these literary works is the "Gilgamesh epic," which recounts the adventures of a mythical king of Uruk. It covers twelve large tablets and contains almost three thousand short lines, about half of which are still legible in our broken copy. This poem and the creation stories attracted great attention when they were discovered, about one hundred years ago, because they told stories closely resembling the Biblical stories of Adam, the patriarchs, and the flood. Today there can be little doubt that the early chapters of Genesis, in the Bible, are somehow connected with these early Sumerian myths.

**Sumerian
literature**

An especially important discovery came in 1901 when French archeologists unearthed a large black stone covered with cuneiform writing. Study soon showed that the inscribed writing was a code of laws issued by the great king Hammurabi. At the top of the stone was a carving showing the king standing before a god, from whom he received the stone itself; the scene is reminiscent of Moses receiving the tables of the Law from God on Mount Sinai. Further discoveries have made it clear that the Semitic Hammurabi did not invent these laws himself but merely assembled or codified the prevailing law of the land, most of which was of Sumerian origin and several centuries old in his day. Nevertheless, Hammurabi's code is invaluable because of the light it throws on the organization of Babylonian society. It speaks of an aristocracy of high officials in church and state who derived their income from land, of a middle class of merchants, artisans, and laborers, and finally of slaves. It mentions the law courts,

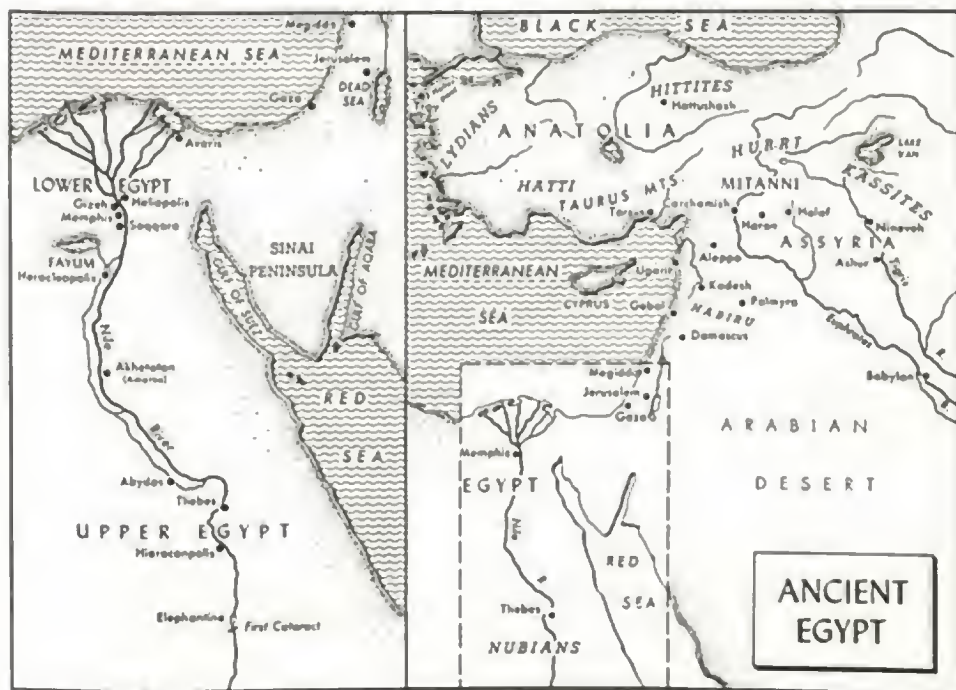
Law codes

some presided over by priests, others by agents of the king, with final appeal to the king himself. It inflicts severe punishments upon criminal offenders, but the greater part of the code is devoted to civil law, discussing family organization, property rights, contracts, the rights of labor, and countless similar matters. Hammurabi's code is our oldest elaborate document in social history.

5. ANCIENT EGYPT

HIGHER civilization in Egypt began at approximately the same time as in Babylonia, but its development followed a somewhat different course. The divergencies may be explained in part by geography. Like Mesopotamia, Egypt is composed of two parts: Upper Egypt, which is the valley of the Nile, and Lower Egypt, which is its delta. (As the Nile flows from south to north, Upper Egypt is southern Egypt, and is placed below Lower Egypt on our

*The land
of Egypt*



maps.) Upper Egypt was the scene of early neolithic cultures at a time when Lower Egypt was still swamp, but though the delta presently became habitable, Upper Egypt retained her cultural ascendancy. This Upper Egypt, the valley of the Nile from ancient Memphis (not far from modern Cairo) south to the First Cataract, is a long narrow cleft, about 125 feet deep, cut by the river into the plain that is now the Sahara Desert. Almost five hundred miles long, it varies in width between two and twenty-five miles. This shoestring-shaped valley and the triangular delta at its mouth contain somewhat less than ten thousand square miles of extremely fertile land. The rest of Egypt, however large it may appear on the map, is only desert waste.

*Egypt's
relative
isolation*

Deserts protected Egypt from outside invaders, though not rendering her so remote as to be inaccessible to traders and other peaceful visitors. While Mesopotamia was often raided by hillmen from the east and by bedouin from the west, Egypt could be invaded only from the Isthmus of Suez at the northeast, and then only after several days' march across the Sinai Desert. Therefore Egypt was rarely entered by hostile armies, and she suffered less than her Asiatic rivals from the ravages of war. The Egyptian people developed along their own lines, working out their own cultural pattern with only occasional disturbance from the outside. Century followed century, and the Egyptians continued in the even tenor of their ways, heedless of time. No wonder they cared little for history and preferred to fix their thoughts, their hopes, and their aspirations upon eternity.

*"The gift
of the
Nile"*

An ancient Greek historian once declared, quite truthfully, that "Egypt is the gift of the Nile." Every year, toward the end of July, the Nile begins to rise, overflowing its banks and flooding the whole valley. When the waters recede in the following October, they leave behind a thin film of mud brought down from the jungles of central Africa. The soil of Egypt, thus constantly renewed, gives splendid crops without the use of fertilizer or crop rotation. The river also irrigates the land, and in early times the Egyptians learned to spread its life-giving waters still farther with artificial canals and thus greatly augment the acreage under cultivation. The narrowness of the valley, with each district dependent upon water from the district above, made it desirable to operate irrigation systems over large areas, or better still, to have one great system for the country as a whole. The construction and maintenance of these irrigation canals required the coöperative effort of people all up and down the Nile and made



SCENES FROM THE TOMB OF TI. Ti was a noble of the Fifth Dynasty who built himself a tomb at Saqqaro. The scenes are from agricultural life—plowing, milking, driving goats, hoeing.

necessary a strong central government. Egypt therefore achieved political unity many centuries before Babylonia, and this unity, once established, was so essential to the life of the nation that it was rarely disturbed.

Egypt's Political History

In late neolithic times Egypt had been made up of some forty districts, later called "nomes," which were gradually amalgamated into the two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. Then, about 3100 B.C., a king of Upper Egypt, traditionally known as Menes, conquered Lower Egypt and founded a united kingdom. Menes was a native of Abydos, a town in the central part of Upper Egypt, but after his victories he established a central government at Memphis, a new city which he founded near the frontier separating Upper from Lower Egypt. Here he and his successors ruled for upward of eight centuries, until about 2250.

This long period in Egyptian history is called the Old Kingdom, and its many kings are divided into six groups, known as the first six

**Egypt
united
by Menes**

**The Old
Kingdom**

dynasties. This was the period of the first great flowering of Egyptian civilization. The earliest pyramids were built by the kings of the Third Dynasty (c. 2750–2700), the largest and most famous by those of the Fourth (c. 2700–2550), while the arts and other aspects of civilization flourished correspondingly. Unfortunately, however, the kings of the Sixth Dynasty (c. 2400–2250) became oppressive, district



AKHNATON. (Louvre)

governors began usurping power, and the dynasty fell. The central government then collapsed and for many years Egypt suffered severely from the misrule of local lords.

When the kings of the Twelfth Dynasty (2000–1780) had finally restored the central authority, they transferred the capital to their native city, Thebes, far up the Nile, which remained the seat of the

***The Middle
Kingdom***



THUTMOSE III. (Cairo Museum)

central government thereafter. For more than two hundred years this dynasty presided over the brilliant period in Egyptian history that is known as the Middle Kingdom. Economic prosperity returned, bringing with it a new creative period in the history of Egyptian civilization. Eventually, however, the dynasty was overthrown by nomadic Asiatics called the Hyksos. Egypt was invaded for the first time since Menes, and the invasion was accompanied by great destruction, especially in the delta. Not until two hundred years later did the native Egyptians regain sufficient strength to expel the Hyksos invaders.

The Empire

The Eighteenth Dynasty (1570–1320) ruled Egypt during the third and last period of her ancient glory, called the Empire. The horrors of the Hyksos invasion had made a deep impression upon the minds of the Egyptians, and a fear-psychosis caused the early rulers of the new dynasty to become aggressive militarists in self-defense. After they had driven out the invaders, they resolved to prevent a repetition of the Hyksos disaster by occupying considerable parts of Asia. The most successful of the warrior kings was Thutmose III (1504–1450), who pushed his frontiers north to the great bend of the Euphrates, while other expeditions reached south to the land of Punt (Somaliland). Egypt was not able to govern so vast a territory, however, and by 1400 her weakness was becoming evident. Marauders from the desert began forcing their way into Palestine and Syria, and the Egyptian king's local governors sometimes joined the invaders. One of the last kings of the dynasty was the famous Akhnaton (1387–1366), whose program of religious and political reform will be discussed presently.

Egypt's decline

The Nineteenth Dynasty (1320–1200) produced another great warrior in Rameses II (1299–1232), who fought successfully in Syria, but Rameses III (1198–1167), of the Twentieth Dynasty, was the last of Egypt's great kings. Soon after his death the Empire collapsed though occasional kings made futile efforts to regain the glory of their predecessors. Egypt was indeed a broken reed. After 945 a succession of foreign dynasties—Libyans from the west and Nubians from the south—ruled Egypt, Assyrians and Persians from Asia conquered the country, and finally a Greek adventurer, Alexander the Great, was crowned king of Egypt in Memphis (332 B.C.). Greeks and Romans between them ruled Egypt for almost a thousand years, until the coming of the Arabs in A.D. 639. Various dynasties from other parts of the Moslem world then held Egypt until late in the nineteenth cen-

ture, when the French and British took over. Only since 1923 has a native government again ruled Egypt. Though Egypt's greatness and even her political autonomy thus passed away, no other nation has approached her two thousand years of history as an independent nation.

Egyptian Government

As we turn from early Babylonia to Egypt we discover a very different spirit pervading both political and social life. While Sumerian civilization rested primarily upon religious foundations, that of Egypt was essentially secular. The Sumerian city-states were theocracies, governed (in theory at least) by the gods; the highly centralized Egyptian state was a monarchy governed by kings. The bureauerats who did the actual work of governing Babylonia were priests; those in Egypt were royal agents. The priests were the great capitalists of Babylonia; in Egypt this function was performed by kings. The triumphs of architecture in Babylonia were temples; those in Egypt were royal tombs and pyramids. Babylonian scholars and scientists were priests; in Egypt they were servants of the king. Babylonian ethical thought was largely religious and supposedly of divine inspiration; that of Egypt was secular, and ethical writings were popularly attributed to kings or their ministers. Even the Semitic Hammurabi saw fit to proclaim that his law code came directly from the gods; in Egypt the kings dispensed justice in their own names, and all Egyptian laws were attributed to kings, even though they might date from hoary antiquity. When kings acquired the power formerly enjoyed by the priests in Babylonia, it marked the beginning of the end; in Egypt, priests had little political power until the country's decline was far advanced.

How are we to account for these striking differences? In Egypt the people as a whole were as religious as peoples elsewhere. They had temples and priests, they developed elaborate systems of ritual and mythology, and they made remarkable contributions to the religious thought of the Western world. Then why was their daily life so thoroughly secular while that of Babylonia was dominated by religion? This secularism may be explained in part, perhaps, by the fact that royal armies united and dominated the country just when Egyptian civilization was taking shape. Going farther, it may be added that the royal military power which effected this unification

**Egypt
contrasted
with
Babylonia**

**Egyptian
secularism**

rested upon the wealth of the kings. But why did kings control the wealth of Egypt while that of Babylonia went to priests? Was it because the Babylonians were subject, in an exceptional degree, to vicissitudes of fortune caused by flood, storm, and foreign invasion, against which they were powerless and which turned their hopes to supernatural aid and to the priests who claimed to represent the gods? Could it be that in Egypt, on the other hand, where life was more regular, and where there was consequently less cause for apprehension, men could better appreciate the civilizing work of secular monarchs? This explanation has been put forward, but the historian, whose only task it is to record what happened, can give no final answer to such deeply philosophical questions.

**Royal
absolutism**

From the days of Menes onward, the kings of Egypt claimed personal leadership, both with the army in the field and in the management of civilian activities at home. In theory the government was absolute, and its activities covered every aspect of life. The king claimed to own all the land of Egypt, and his agents directed its use, deciding what crops should be raised, providing seed, and marketing the produce. Commerce and industry were likewise directed by royal officials, and even in early times the kings sent expeditions abroad seeking raw materials. To justify this royal absolutism, the king proclaimed himself a god, the incarnation of one or more of the great deities (notably Horus and Re), and as such he received divine honors while still alive. It is not easy, however, to say how much of the reverence he received was religious and how much of it was patriotic.

**Court and
bureaucracy**

The king resided in a huge palace, called the Per-o (whence our word "Pharaoh," used in the Bible for the king himself), where he was surrounded by an elaborate court made up of nobles and the high officials who directed the central government. Other officials were sent to govern the nomes (local units) and to take charge of important royal projects in different parts of Egypt. Nobility was hereditary, but officials were often recruited from the scribes who managed the details of government. Access to the vast army of scribes was possible for any ambitious and intelligent boy, and it opened a road to wealth and power. At times this bureaucracy of scribes became so large as to be unmanageable and oppressive, a terrible burden to Egypt, but for many centuries it governed the country intelligently and well.

Egyptian Arts and Sciences

The Egyptians began to write shortly before the time of Menes, and under the Twelfth Dynasty their style of writing attained its classic form. In Egypt, as in Babylonia, the earliest writing was picture writing, with certain pictures used to represent sounds rather than the things pictured. But whereas the Sumerians simplified the pictures into standardized cuneiform characters, the Egyptians carefully preserved their pictorial and artistic qualities: every Egyptian character remained an easily recognizable picture of something, and formal inscriptions on stone were always works of art. When writing in less formal style, the scribes developed a more fluent script, later called "hieratic" (priestly) as opposed to the formal "hieroglyphic" (sacred carving) of the inscriptions. For ordinary writing the Egyptians used a sort of paper known as "papyrus," which was far more convenient than the Babylonian clay tablets. This paper was made from the stalks of the papyrus plants, the "bulrushes" of the Biblical story of the infant Moses), which grew along the banks of the Nile. As papyrus was the only form of paper known in antiquity, and as the plants grew only in Egypt, the Egyptians always enjoyed a profitable monopoly on the manufacture of paper. Thousands of inscriptions on stone have been preserved, and hundreds of thousands of papyri: most of our papyri date from Greek and Roman times, it is true, but many come from the days of the Egyptian Empire and a few even from the Old Kingdom.

**Egyptian
writing**

The convenience and relative cheapness of papyrus enabled the Egyptians to write many things which the Sumerians would have preserved only in their memories. Among other things, the papyri have preserved many examples of early Egyptian literature. Thus we find Egyptian stories of travel and adventure, several of which are reminiscent of *The Arabian Nights*. (This Arabic collection of stories was made in Egypt more than a thousand years after Christ.) Other papyri contain collections of songs, poems, and proverbs; others preserve treatises on medicine and other scientific subjects; others deal with magic; and still others discuss religion, mythology, and philosophy. The Egyptians made greater progress than the Sumerians in mathematics, having worked out the fundamentals of geometry as well as of arithmetic. One of their great inventions was a solar

**Literature
and science**



THE PYRAMIDS AT GIZEH. The pyramid to the left is that of Khafre, with its "Valley Temple" in the lower right-hand corner of the picture and the sphinx nearby. The pyramid was connected with the temple by a long causeway, up which the blocks of stone had been dragged from rafts on the river. The second pyramid is that of Khufu, with three small pyramids for members of the royal family, and mastabas, or tombs, for the king's nobles surrounding the large pyramid. (Reconstruction by Hoelscher)

calendar of 365 days, with twelve months of thirty days each and five extra days added at the end of the year. This calendar, whose year was slightly less than six hours too short, probably was invented about 2700 B.C., under the Third or Fourth Dynasty.

The pyramids

The most famous monuments of Egypt are, of course, the pyramids. These enormous structures, which served as tombs for the early kings, represent the culmination of a long evolution. The first pyramids date from the Third Dynasty, the last from the Twelfth, and they number more than sixty in all. The best known are the three largest, built at Gizeh not far from Memphis, by kings of the Fourth Dynasty. The largest of the three, the tomb of Khufu or Cheops, measures 756 feet on a side and its height is 481 feet; it therefore covers about 18 acres and is almost half as high as the Empire State Building. It contains about 2,300,000 stone blocks averaging $2\frac{1}{4}$ tons in weight. The sides of the pyramid square exactly with the points of the compass; its base is square, with an error of less than an inch; the joinings of the stones enclosing the burial chamber itself are too close to permit the in-

section of a needle. The interior stones are of limestone; the outside stones (now gone) were a superior white limestone; and the burial chamber is lined with polished granite. The stones were cut in quarries several miles away, floated down the Nile on rafts, and dragged along a causeway to their places in the pyramid. The workmen who trimmed the stones had no tools of any material harder than flint and copper; the builders used levers, ropes, and stone rollers, but they knew nothing of pulleys; and there was no power but man power. The more one studies these great pyramids, the more one is amazed at the science and skill of the Egyptian engineers who built them about 2600 B.C. After the Fourth Dynasty, however, standards of workmanship declined, the interior of later pyramids was made of brick, and eventually pyramids were built which were nothing but stone casings filled with sand.

The Egyptians also had temples which, in the days of the Old and Middle kingdoms, were usually dedicated to the king as a deity. Such a temple was built near each of the pyramids, the most famous of them being the "Valley Temple" of Khafre, attached to the second pyramid at Gizeh. New styles of architecture came in later times, and the most famous constructions of the Empire period are temples near Thebes. But though styles might change, Egyptian architects continued to design their buildings on a colossal scale.

Temples



TEMPLE AT LUXOR. This huge temple was built at Luxor, near Thebes in Upper Egypt, under the Eighteenth Dynasty, about 1400 B.C.

**Artistic
skill**

Egyptian artists showed much greater skill than their Babylonian contemporaries in sculpture, painting, and the making of jewelry. In all these fields, the styles set in the Old Kingdom remained dominant throughout Egyptian history. Sometimes there was an improvement in workmanship, but not always. The most dazzling discovery of lesser works of art was made in 1923, when archeologists opened the tomb of Tutankhamen, the next to the last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty. These finds are now on display in the National Museum in Cairo, but the visitor who examines them after studying the materials from the Fourth Dynasty, exhibited on the floor below, may well ask himself whether Egyptian artists had made any real progress during the intervening thirteen hundred years. After the Nineteenth Dynasty, Egypt contributed little to the fine arts.

Egyptian Religion**The gods
of Egypt**

In spite of the secularism that pervaded so much of their lives, the Egyptians thought deeply upon theological matters and developed an elaborate religious system. Their gods were of many sorts. In predynastic times (i.e., before Menes) each Egyptian "nome" had a local god that served it as patron and protector. Such gods were commonly represented in the form of animals or other living beings—one god was pictured as a falcon, another as a jackal, a third as a snake—or sometimes they were given more human forms, as of a man with a jackal's or a falcon's head. These ancient gods were worshiped locally throughout Egyptian history, but after the unification of the country one of them was considered a supreme god. Under the Old Kingdom the supreme god was the falcon-god Horus; under the Middle Kingdom and Empire, it was Amon, once the local protector of Thebes. These city gods were supplemented by countless spirits and supernatural beings somewhat resembling the jinn and afreet of *The Arabian Nights*. Though often invoked, appeased, and cajoled by the common people, these lesser gods never played important roles in the religion of Egypt.

**Re, the
sun god**

The sun god Re was a much more important deity. His name became the Egyptian word for the sun, and his symbol was the obelisk, a pillar pointed toward the sun. As Re had no city of his own, he could be worshiped anywhere and he presently became a sort of universal deity. From a famous temple at Heliopolis (twenty miles north of Memphis) his worship spread to all Egypt. Sometimes he

was identified with Horus or Aton (the local god of Heliopolis) and later with Amon. His priests concocted an elaborate mythology, describing the origin and subordinate position of the other gods as well as the creation of the world and of man. Kings of the Fifth Dynasty claimed to be "Sons of Re," giving him lavish gifts and establishing a state-supported priesthood to serve him, and they made the Heliopolitan theology official.

Still another sort of god was Osiris. He was an ancient dying and rising god, resembling Tammuz in Babylonia. Myths told how he was murdered by his enemy Set, who cut his body to pieces and threw them into the Nile. Isis, the wife of Osiris, then sought them out, sorrowing, until she had found them all and brought him back to life. Like Tammuz, Osiris rewarded his worshipers with good crops in this world and with a vague and shadowy immortality in the nether world hereafter. He was worshiped especially by the peasants of Egypt, and he became a powerful force in democratizing the religion of Egypt. Long after such official deities as Amon and Re had been overthrown and forgotten, Osiris was still worshiped throughout Egypt. Only thirty years before the birth of Christ the famous Cleopatra proclaimed herself an incarnation of Isis, and a century later the Greek Plutarch wrote a sympathetic essay on Isis and Osiris.

*Isis and
Osiris*

From the earliest times the Egyptians had concerned themselves with the problem of immortality. In prehistoric times rich men built themselves elaborate tombs, in which they placed food and other materials for use in the next world; the great kings of the Old Kingdom erected the pyramids to protect their mortal remains; and the kings of the Empire prepared for themselves underground tombs hidden in the desert west of Thebes. Also the art of making mummies was invented in early times, to preserve the bodies of the rich from decay.

*Tombs and
immortality*

It is to Egyptian theologians, speculating on the fate of souls after death, that we owe our popular conceptions of a "heaven" of bliss for the righteous in the sky and an underground "hell" of fiery torture for the wicked. Many Egyptian texts give elaborate directions for gaining admission to heaven. Some imply that the dead man need only know the correct formulas, incantations, and passwords in order to pass its gates, but others indicate that high moral conduct was expected of him. The earlier texts associate immortality with Re, and promise this blessing only to kings and nobles, but under the Twelfth Dynasty the influence of Osiris worship opened immortality to every-

*Heaven
and hell*

one, and Osiris himself became judge of the dead. Truly high standards of morality and justice were proclaimed under the Old and Middle kingdoms, but in later times admission to heaven tended to become a routine matter for those who paid the price in material goods. Priests manufactured and sold books of formulas whose efficacy they guaranteed, and one such manufacturer even had the effrontery to threaten Re with deposition if he failed to honor the passports to heaven that were being sold by his avaricious priests!

**Akhnaton's
reforms**

Perhaps the most fascinating character in all Egyptian history is the reforming Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV, better known as Akhnaton. He succeeded his father, Amenhotep III, in 1375 and ruled until his death in 1366. Coming near the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, he found the Empire showing clear signs of decay. Though detesting this whole imperial system, Akhnaton was especially hostile to the priests of Amon who supported and profited by it and who had become a tremendous power in the state. In order to break completely with the old regime, Akhnaton built a new capital, at a place now called Amarna about halfway between Thebes and Memphis. Here he set up his court and surrounded himself with a nobility of his own creation, after which he resumed possession of the lands that his predecessors had assigned to the priests of Amon. Rejecting this harsh, imperialistic deity, Akhnaton addressed his devotions to the gentle and helpful Aton. As the struggle between the old and the new systems grew more bitter, Akhnaton deprived Amon not only of his lands and worshippers but even of his existence! In other words, Akhnaton declared that Aton was the only god that really existed, and he has therefore been hailed as the world's first monotheist.

**Triumph
of Amon's
priests**

Akhnaton's reforms were of no avail. After nine brief years of rule he died and was succeeded by a youthful son-in-law. Egypt was bankrupt, foreign invaders were seizing the provinces of Palestine and Syria, and the priests of Amon saw their opportunity to regain wealth and power. They won over the boy-king, who changed his name to Tutankhamen and restored their confiscated lands. When he died, shortly thereafter, they repaid his favors with a magnificent funeral and a gaudy tomb. Priestly power increased rapidly thereafter, until at last the high priests of Amon at Thebes ruled all Egypt as the Twenty-first Dynasty (1085-945). This was the last native dynasty to rule Egypt for almost three hundred years.

After the failure of Akhnaton's reform, everything declined in Egypt. Outward religious pomp and formality superseded true religion. When the Greek historian Herodotus visited Egypt, about 450 B.C., he was favorably impressed by many of the things he saw, but he made no attempt to hide his contempt for the Egyptian gods and their worship. He remarked sarcastically that the Egyptians were "the most religious of peoples," and proceeded to show that, in his day, their religion amounted to little more than the scrupulous observance of inane or ridiculous ceremonies and taboos. In its great days, Egyptian religion would not have merited such sarcasm.

*Religion
replaced by
religiosity*

6. THE HEIRS OF EGYPT

*Megaliths
and bell
beakers in
the West*

WHILE Egypt was supreme in the East, various new civilizations were gradually taking form in western and central Europe. Toward the end of the third millennium monuments built of enormous stones began to appear in the West. Some apparently were tombs; others were temples, the most famous of which is the great Stonehenge in southern England, built about 1700 B.C. The men who built these huge monuments are now called megalith builders ("megalith" means "big stone"), and as the megaliths usually stand within a few miles of the sea, it is assumed that their builders were sailors and traders who traveled up and down the Atlantic coast and even entered the Mediterranean. At about the same time the "bell beaker" pottery—so called because the jars are shaped like inverted bells—appeared in western and central Europe. The people who made it apparently wandered about in small bands, taking their potters and coppersmiths with them, trading and fighting as occasion offered. Both megaliths and bell beakers bear witness to the growing importance of commerce. When the Third Dynasty was ruling Ur, and the Middle Kingdom prevailed in Egypt, western Europe began to emerge from the neolithic stage of civilization and to develop trade.

Bronze

At about this time, too, came the invention of bronze. The secret of making this alloy was probably discovered independently in several places at different times. Smiths had long been trying to harden copper with various alloys, and about 2200 B.C., they began mixing copper and tin in the ratio of ten to one, thus producing true bronze. Bronze daggers soon began to supplement the metal battle-axes that had long been in use, but swords were not possible until several centuries later. Nevertheless, these bronze daggers gave a great advantage to their happy possessors and enabled them to conquer new lands.

The early neolithic peoples of Europe were, as we have seen (page 18), a mixture of Mediterraneans and Alpines, with Alpine blood predominant in central Europe. Soon after 2500, however, men of Nordic race began to invade that region from the north and east. They were simple nomads, caring for their flocks and herds but knowing little of agriculture, and they were excellent fighters. They were therefore able to set themselves up as an aristocracy in central Europe, reducing the earlier inhabitants to serfdom. Soon there was extensive mixture of blood, but though the Nordics became more civilized, they lost none of their martial skill and ardor. Armed with bronze weapons, they presently began a series of new migrations, reaching from the Atlantic to India, and they thereby turned the history of Europe and the Near East in new directions.

**Nordics
in central
Europe**

One result of these migrations was the Hittite Empire, which dominated Asia Minor in the days of the Empire in Egypt. The Hittites, or at least the upper classes among them, were a Nordic people speaking a language akin to Greek and Latin. They invaded Asia Minor from Europe shortly after 2000 B.C., subjugated the primitive Hatti, and founded an empire with its capital at Hattushash—not far from the present Ankara. Coming in contact with the Sumerian civilization brought to that region by traders in the great days of the Third Dynasty of Ur, they began to write their language with cuneiform characters. During World War I a Czech scholar succeeded in deciphering this writing, and hundreds of tablets have given us a good idea of Hittite history, government, law, mythology, and religion.

**Hittites in
Asia Minor**

After establishing themselves in central Asia Minor, the Hittite kings gradually extended their power until they raided Babylon in 1595. Thereafter little was heard of them for two hundred years, but after 1400 they became serious rivals of the declining Egyptians. Shortly before 1350, Akhnaton's daughter, the widow of Tutankhamen, actually invited the Hittite king to send his son to help her rule Egypt as her consort. Unfortunately, however, the young man was murdered on his arrival in Egypt. Half a century later the Hittites fought a great battle with Rameses II at Kadesh in Syria (1294). Each king claimed the victory, but a few years later they entered into a treaty (we have copies in both Egyptian and Hittite) by which northern Syria went to the Hittites while Egypt retained southern Syria and Palestine.

**Wars with
Egypt**

The Hittite decline began about a century later. In the eleventh century various European peoples invaded Asia Minor from Thrace

**Heirs of the
Hittites**

(modern Bulgaria and Turkey in Europe) and overthrew the Hittites. Some of the invaders established the Phrygian kingdom in central Asia Minor while others founded Lydia farther west. After a few centuries the Lydians destroyed the Phrygians (c. 680) but were presently overthrown themselves by the Persians (546). Before their defeat, however, they had absorbed much oriental culture, some of which they passed on to the nearby Greeks. After the destruction of Hittite power in Asia Minor various "Syro-Hittite" kingdoms continued in southeastern Asia Minor and Syria until the coming of the Assyrians in the eighth century. The "Hittites" mentioned at various places in the Bible undoubtedly were Syro-Hittites, not the Nordic aristocrats of Asia Minor.

Philistines

Meantime other tiny states had arisen to fill the vacuum left by the collapse of Egypt. First among them we may mention the Philistines. It seems probable that this people came from Asia Minor, whence they may have been driven by the disturbances accompanying the Phrygian invasions. They raided Syria and Palestine by sea, and some of them even reached Egypt, after which they settled in various cities along the Palestinian coast—in Gaza and Gath, among others. The Philistines soon ruled much of Palestine, giving it their name, but in the end they were destroyed by the Hebrews. Though the Philistines loom large in early Biblical narratives, they made no important contributions to world civilization.

Phoenicians

Farther north along the Mediterranean coast were Phoenician cities such as Tyre, Sidon, Gebal, and Ugarit. As the Lebanon Mountains prevented expansion eastward, the inhabitants of these cities looked west to the sea, and from early times they were famous traders. The Egyptians called them *Fenkhu*, which apparently meant "ship-builders," and perhaps our "Phoenician" comes from this word through the Greek. Even in the days of the Old Kingdom, Gebal had traded with Egypt, and all the Phoenician cities fell under Egyptian domination in the days of the Empire. After the Egyptian decline, Tyre assumed leadership, and eventually her ships were sailing the whole Mediterranean. They visited the Aegean area in the tenth and ninth centuries, and before 900 they had even reached Gibraltar. Tyrians founded Gades in Spain outside Gibraltar, and other trading posts were established in Spain, North Africa, Sicily, Sardinia, and Malta. The largest and most famous of these colonies was at Carthage, in North Africa, which dated from about 800. When the Assyrians conquered the Phoenician cities, in the eighth century, the colonies

were left to shift for themselves and Carthage assumed leadership. Carthaginians then built up the great empire against which Rome later fought long and bloody wars.

The Phoenicians are important because of their pioneer work in promoting the economic unification of the Mediterranean basin, but they contributed little to the other aspects of civilization. Nevertheless, the whole civilized world is indebted to them for one major invention, namely, the alphabet. Several recently discovered inscriptions show that in the early days of the Egyptian Empire the Phoenicians were making many attempts to write their Semitic dialects in simplified forms of hieroglyphic or cuneiform. They presently found that they could do so with only a small number of different letters. One early attempt of this sort was illustrated in an inscription found in the Sinai Peninsula, whose twenty-seven different letters bear an obvious resemblance to characters in Egyptian hieroglyphic. After considerable modification and simplification, these letters became, about the year 1000, the classic Phoenician alphabet of twenty-two letters, from which most modern alphabets were later derived. The Greek alphabet, based on the Phoenician, became the basis of both the Roman and the Russian alphabets, in one or the other of which all European languages are written today. Both the idea of alphabetic writing and the forms we give the various letters are thus of Phoenician origin.

*Invention
of the
alphabet*

Meantime the Arameans, another Semitic people, were spreading out from the desert into Syria east of the mountains. Damascus became their principal city, but other groups of Arameans entered the northern part of the Fertile Crescent and Babylonia. One such band, sometimes called Chaldeans, settled in the lower part of Babylonia and eventually extended its political power over the whole district. Like their Phoenician contemporaries, the Arameans were great traders and their caravans regularly crossed the deserts to visit the whole Near East, just as the Phoenician ships were then crossing the Mediterranean to visit the West. At an early date the Arameans began writing their language in a modified Phoenician alphabet, which they carried as far as western Asia Minor, the Caucasus, and India. Kings and businessmen employed Aramean scribes, who wrote other languages with Aramaic letters. Spoken and written Aramaic served as the international language of trade and diplomacy throughout the Near East until it was replaced by Arabic in the seventh century after Christ.

Arameans

SINAITIC	CANAANITE- PHOENICIAN	EARLY GREEK	LATER GREEK	LATIN	ENGLISH
				A	A
				B	B
				CG	C, G
				D	D
				E	E
				FV	F, U, V, W, Y
					Z
				H	H
					(Th)
				I	I, J
					K
				L	L
				M	M
				N	N
				X	(X)
				O	O
				P	P
					(S)
				Q	Q
				R	R
				S	S
				T	T

ALPHABETS. Diagram showing the development of the Phoenician, Greek, and Latin alphabets. (Oriental Museum)

THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

While Phoenicians and Arameans were building up their wide commercial empires, the Assyrians were slowly gaining military supremacy in the Near East. Though Assyria (the northern half of Mesopotamia) had been the scene of the earliest neolithic civilization, it soon fell behind its neighbor to the south, and for many centuries it was a cultural colony of Babylonia. In the dark period at the middle of the second millennium it suffered less than Babylonia from barbarian invaders, partly perhaps because its poverty made it less attractive. Once or twice during these long centuries we hear of Assyrian kings who received pensions from the Pharaohs, notably from Amenhotep III. At the very end of the twelfth century a vigorous Assyrian king made extensive conquests, which were soon lost, and for three centuries thereafter his successors attracted little attention. The great days of Assyrian power came in the eighth and seventh centuries, when a series of remarkable kings dominated the Near East. Theirs was the first great empire of the Iron Age.

**Early
Assyria**

A brief overall picture of the long and confusing story of Assyrian military advance must suffice. Before the end of the eighth century the hillsmen who had formerly harassed Assyria from the north were reduced to impotence, but the Assyrian kings never attempted to subjugate them. The Assyrians also fought frequently with the Chaldeans who had established themselves in Babylonia. The victorious Assyrians never pacified the Chaldeans completely, though they sacked Babylon itself in 689 and their king, the great Assurbanipal (669-626), had himself proclaimed king of the whole region. Meanwhile the Assyrians were more successfully advancing their rule to the west. Syria was conquered, and Damascus itself was taken in 732. All the Phoenician cities except Tyre were reduced during the next few years, and Jerusalem was unsuccessfully besieged in 701. The Jewish king learned his lesson, however, and paid tribute to the Assyrians thereafter. The Assyrians also advanced north from Syria, occupied Tarsus and the Cilician plain, and crossed the Taurus Mountains into central Asia Minor. An Assyrian king lost his life in this campaign (705), but his successors dominated the southeastern part of Asia Minor for almost a century. Last of all, Egypt was occupied in 669, after which the Assyrian Empire included all the lands dominated by ancient oriental civilization.

**Building
an empire**

Assurbanipal came to the throne in 669, and the forty-three years of his reign mark Assyria's high point, but also the beginning of her decline. When Assurbanipal found that he could not hold Egypt, he set up a vassal dynasty (the Twenty-sixth, 663-525), which soon forgot its loyalty to him. Babylonia too caused frequent trouble, and when the great king died (626), the Assyrian Empire was only an empty shell. A Chaldean leader then entered into an alliance with the Medes in Persia, and the two allies marched on the Assyrian capital at Nineveh. They easily captured and destroyed the city (612) and the Assyrian Empire reached its inglorious end.

*The fall of
Nineveh
(612)*

The victorious allies divided the empire between them, with the Medes taking Nineveh and the northern possessions, including those in Asia Minor, while the Chaldeans took the southern part, including Babylonia and Syria. The Chaldean, or Second Babylonian, Empire then led a brilliant existence for seventy-four years. Babylon became a rich and famous city, the capital of the new empire. When revolts broke out, soon after the fall of Nineveh, they were quickly suppressed. Jerusalem was entered in 597 and again in 586, and on each occasion many Jews were deported to Babylonia. But in general, the Chaldean kings changed very little, and their empire was merely a continuation of that of the Assyrians. In spite of their wealth, however, they were not strong in a military sense, and in 538 their empire collapsed before the Persians.

*The
Chaldean
Empire*

Assyrian Civilization

It was the Assyrians' good fortune to hold the fords across the upper Tigris River that were used by caravans traveling between Syria and Babylonia. In early times they robbed the merchants unmercifully, but it presently occurred to them that this practice resembled killing the goose that laid the golden egg. They found it more profitable to charge tolls, which they boastfully called "tribute." The Assyrians then desired to have as many merchants as possible pass their way and, to facilitate the collection of tribute, they protected their victims from other robbers. In other words, the Assyrians successfully sold "protection" to the merchants, and the merchants presently learned that they were getting their money's worth. The true Assyrians were primarily rulers and soldiers (and peasants), but throughout their history they did what they could to promote trade and industry, and their military successes promoted the

*Assyrian
militarism
and trade*



ASSYRIAN BULL. Many such "bulls" have been found in Assyria, and are the "cherubs" of the Old Testament. This one served as the side of a gateway at the palace of Sargon II at Dur Sharrukin. Sixteen feet high and weighing 40 tons, it now stands in the museum of the Oriental Institute at Chicago. (*Oriental Institute*)

economic unification and prosperity of the whole Near East. This fact was a major reason for Assyria's successes, and it is highly significant that when the merchants of the Near East transferred their allegiance to the Chaldeans, the Assyrian Empire tumbled down like a house of cards.

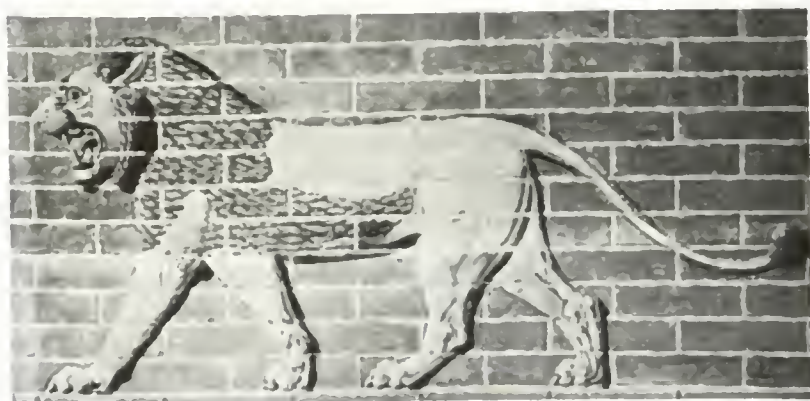
**Assyria's
Iron Age
armies**

Assyria's military triumphs were due in part to the spirit of discipline that had been bred into her people during the long years of barbarian attacks after Hammurabi, in part to the fact that her armies were the first to be adequately equipped with iron weapons. Philistines and others had used iron, but in their day the metal was

so rare and the process of smelting it so inefficient that the cost of iron weapons was almost prohibitive. A few leaders might have iron daggers with which to finish off a fallen opponent, but the well-drilled Assyrian armies were the first to be widely equipped with good iron swords. It must be added, however, that the Assyrians contributed little else to world civilization. Their importance lies in the fact that, cruel as they undoubtedly were, they brought an Assyrian peace to the Near East, thus enabling some of their subjects to make new progress in civilization. The Assyrians themselves were the protectors of culture rather than its creators.

Something of the old Sumerian-Babylonian civilization had survived through the dark ages following Hammurabi, and under Assyrian protection it blossomed anew. The Assyrian language, a Semitic tongue closely resembling the old Babylonian, was written with the same cuneiform characters on the same sort of clay tablets. Assyrians worshiped Babylonian gods, read Babylonian books, and practiced Babylonian magic. At Nineveh Assurbanipal collected a library of old Babylonian texts which, when discovered toward the

*Revival of
Babylonian
civilization*



CHALDEAN LION. Relief of a lion in glazed brick from Babylon, dating from the Chaldean period (612-539 B.C.).

middle of the nineteenth century, gave European scholars their first glimpse of Babylonian and Sumerian literature. Meantime Chaldean scientists were making noteworthy progress in astronomy and other sciences, artisans were improving upon old Babylonian techniques, and architects and artists were erecting better buildings and carving better reliefs than had been known even in the days of Hammurabi. Cultural progress continued along the old lines under the Chaldean

Empire, under the Persians, and even after the coming of Alexander the Great (331).

THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

*Invasion
of Iran by
the Nordics*

The passing of the Assyrian and Chaldean empires opened the way for the Persians, who dominated the Near East for upward of two hundred years thereafter. In the fourth and third millenniums before Christ the land of Persia (modern Iran) had been inhabited by various peoples of rather primitive neolithic civilization, some of whom were of Mediterranean stock while others were Alpine mountaineers from the north and still others were related to the dark races of India. They were influenced slightly by Sumerian civilization, but as yet archeologists have found no evidence of noteworthy native achievements. Early in the second millennium, however, much of Iran was overrun by invaders from the north. The leaders and aristocracy among these invaders were northerners, who spoke "Indo-European" dialects of the eastern variety (see page 30) and who presumably had separated from the western Nordics many centuries before. Some of these invaders entered the Indus Valley, where they imposed their rule, their language (Sanskrit), and many of their religious practices upon the earlier inhabitants. Others settled in Iran and a few adventurers even reached the northern part of the Fertile Crescent in the dark period following Hammurabi. They introduced the horse into the Near East, but in these early years they made no other important contributions to civilization.

*Medes and
Persians*

During the next thousand years new invaders from central Asia entered Iran on several occasions and became the local aristocracy. There was a gradual amalgamation of culture and blood during this long period, but the country was dominated by a strong aristocracy whose primary interest was in their flocks and herds. As the invaders had no political unity, Iran was divided among many tribes. Two of these tribal groups were the Medes and the Persians, who held the western part of Iran and who were therefore the only ones mentioned by Assyrian chroniclers and later by the Bible. The Medes had their capital at Ecbatana and held the mountainous region between Assyria and the Caspian Sea; the Persians (in the narrow sense of one tribe) lived farther south along the shores of the Persian Gulf.

*The Median
Empire*

An Assyrian inscription mentions the Medes as early as 835, but little more is heard of them until 612, when they coöperated with the Chaldeans in destroying Nineveh. The Medes apparently had estab-

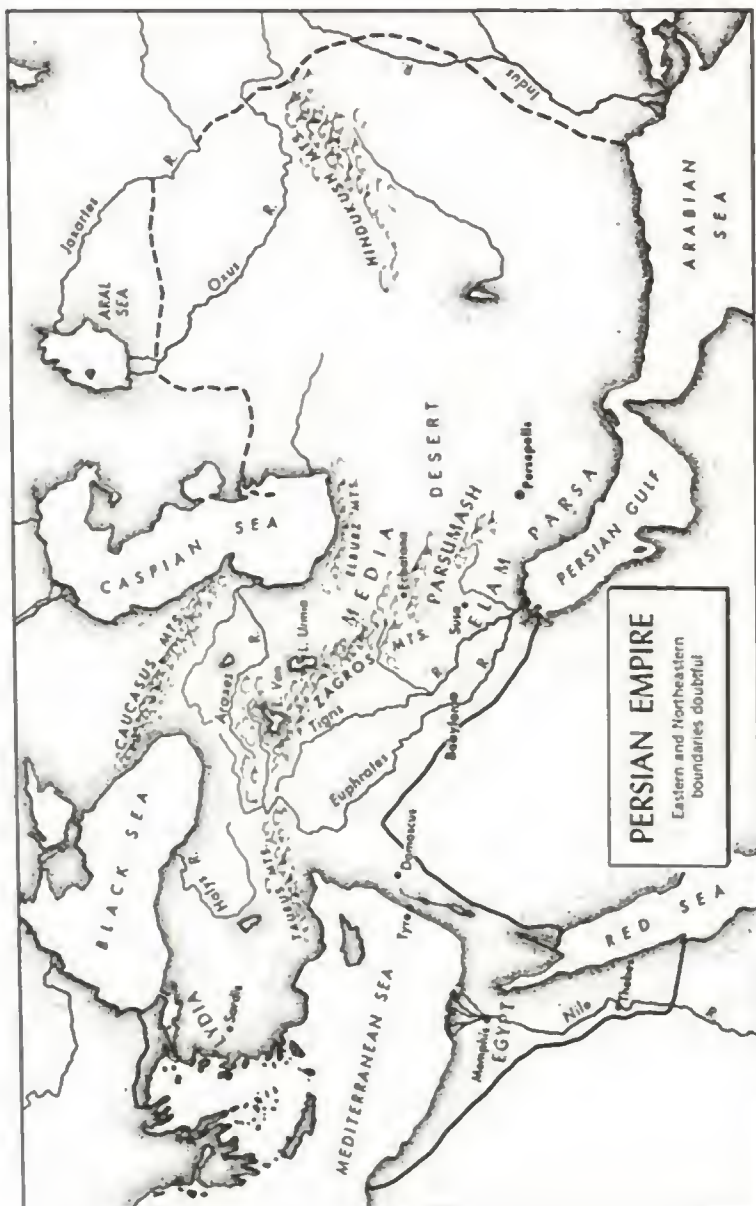
lished their rule over most of Iran as far east as India during these dark centuries. Their victory over the Assyrians then gave them an empire extending from the Indus to central Asia Minor, yet they were soon defeated and overthrown by Cyrus the Persian.

The Persian tribes, like the other Iranians, had once recognized some sort of Median overlordship, but they took no part in the attack upon Nineveh. As soon as Cyrus became their leader (559), he began plotting against the Medes, and after a victory in 550 he claimed the whole Median Empire as his spoils. Continuing his military aggression, he advanced into western Asia Minor, where he overthrew the Lydian kingdom (546) and soon thereafter annexed the various Greek cities along the Aegean coast. Presently Syria and Palestine were added, and in 538 his armies entered Babylon itself. When he died in 529, Cyrus ruled all southwestern Asia from the Indus to the Aegean, from the Caspian and the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf. His son Cambyses (529-522) added Egypt in 525, thus completing the conquest of the ancient Orient.

**Cyrus the
Persian**

The third ruler of the Persian Empire was Darius I (522-486). Revolts broke out on Cambyses' death, and his distant cousin, Darius, was not secure upon the throne until 519. Darius was essentially a man of peace, an organizer and administrator, during whose long reign the government of the empire was established upon firm foundations. From his enormous palace at Persepolis, he and his advisers ruled the empire. This empire was divided into about forty provinces, each under a Persian "satrap"; an elaborate system of roads was built and policed; gold and silver coins were introduced (money had only recently been invented by the Lydians); and the peace which prevailed throughout the empire brought economic prosperity to all classes of people. In spite of the fact that the Persians were foreign conquerors, differing widely from their subjects in race, language, religion, and political tradition, they ruled their empire remarkably well, never interfering with the local customs and religions of the people. Though several rebellions broke out in the course of Persian history, almost without exception they were led by ambitious satraps; the subject peoples were contented. Except for a brief expedition into Thrace in 514 and for wars with the Greeks in 490 and 480 (see page 109), Darius and his successors usually followed a peaceful foreign policy, being satisfied with what they held. Few kings of outstanding ability followed Darius, but the machine that he set up continued to function for a century and a half.

Darius





APADANA STAIRWAY. Stairway leading up to Darius's palace at Persepolis. The soldiers shown in the reliefs are the king's bodyguards, known as "The Immortals." (*Oriental Institute*)

The Persian Empire was overthrown in 331 by the Greek adventurer Alexander the Great, but it continued to live in the minds and imagination of men. The Asiatics who were ruled by Alexander's successors looked back with longing to the days of Persian rule—though under the Persians no one had yearned for a return of the Assyrians. About 250 B.C. a local Parthian leader living near the Caspian Sea set up an independent kingdom, and within a century his successors held all Iran; before 100 B.C. they had added Mesopotamia to their domain. Theirs was the Parthian, or Second Persian, Empire. During the next three centuries it repeatedly fought with Rome, and occasionally its armies inflicted grave defeats upon the Roman legions. In A.D. 225 the Parthian dynasty collapsed, but the Third Persian Empire immediately took its place and continued the struggle with Rome until it

**Later
Persian
empires**

fell before the Moslem conquerors in A.D. 641. The coming of the Moslems inaugurated a new period in the history of the Near East (see page 306).

Zoroastrian Religion

**Early
Persian
religion**

At the time of Cyrus and Darius, the Persians gave little evidence of the literary and artistic talents for which they later became famous, but in Zoroaster they had already produced one of the world's great religious prophets. Little is known of the religion of the earliest inhabitants of Iran, and not much more of the early religion of the Nordic invaders. We know that the latter recognized many gods (*ahuras*) and devils (*daevas*), and that they had priests called *magi*. They did not have temples or idols, but they offered sacrifices outdoors, and their reverence for fire was so great that they are sometimes spoken of as fire worshipers.

Zoroaster

The prophet Zoroaster, who lived in eastern Iran from about 660 to 583, belonged to the old Nordic aristocracy, but he was much opposed to its ways. Like Akhnaton long before in Egypt, and like several of the Hebrew prophets who were approximately his contemporaries, Zoroaster was both a social and a religious reformer. Coming forward as a champion of the humbler classes (the herdsmen and farmers), he spoke bitterly of the aristocrats and their magian allies. He vividly pictured the darker side of the military aristocracy, and he prayed for a king strong enough to establish justice throughout the land. Closely associated with all this were his attacks upon the magi and their gods. Zoroaster selected one god, Ahura Mazda, raised him far above the others, associated him with truth, justice, and good order, and compared him to light. The other *ahuras* became lesser beings in Mazda's service, somewhat resembling angels; the *daevas*, on the other hand, were denounced as "liars" and compared to darkness. The prophet then pictured life as a constant struggle between these two forces. He predicted that at the end of the world Mazda would triumph and that all men would then be judged according to their works.

**Darius
and the new
religion**

There is no evidence that the Medes or Cyrus were followers of Zoroaster, but Darius certainly was his devoted disciple. Perhaps Darius was encouraged to follow this line by the fact that the troublesome revolts at the beginning of his reign were instigated by the magi. Darius endeavored to be a king such as Zoroaster had prayed

for, and thereby he became a typical oriental despot: a ruler far removed from his people, whom he was supposed to govern with divine wisdom. The pomp and circumstance of court ritual were magnified to enhance his prestige and to impress upon men's minds his greatness and his uniqueness.

The magi struggled for a while against the new religion, but when they found that they could not destroy it they decided to accept it instead. Nevertheless, they retained many of the old ideas against which Zoroaster had declaimed. A few of the old *ahuras* were restored to their former glory, notably Anahita, a vegetation goddess innch like Ishtar, and the sun god Mithra. The magi had much to do with the elaborate ritualism of later worship, and they wrote commentaries to explain away Zoroaster's more embarrassing teachings. They also tried to be specific about the end of the world and the coming "millennium"—so called because they predicted that it would come after a thousand years (in Latin, *mille* means "thousand," *annus*, "year"). In the popular mind, however, these priests were especially concerned with dream interpreting and magic: our very word "magic" can, of course, be traced back to their name.

Alexander is said to have destroyed many Zoroastrian books, but he could not destroy the religion, which revived under the Parthians and reached its greatest glory as the official religion of the Third Persian Empire. The Zoroastrian scriptures—called the Avesta—then received their standard form, though some of them go back almost to Zoroaster himself. The religion suffered again after the Mohammedan conquest, and in the end it was virtually stamped out in Iran. Before this catastrophe befell them, however, many Zoroastrians had fled to India, where they still exist as "Parsees."

Zoroastrian ideas also spread to the West, where they were taken up by Greeks and Romans and passed on to us. In the third century Mithra worship was very popular in the Roman Empire, especially among the soldiers. Even today we speak in good Zoroastrian style of the "powers of light" and the "powers of darkness," and of the "millennium." Much of our folklore about angels and devils is of Persian origin. December 25 (the winter solstice) was first celebrated as the birthday of Mithra. Baptism was an ancient Persian rite, and our word "paradise" is derived from the Persian word for "garden." Along with these superficial symbols, much of the noblest thought of the ancient Orient was brought to the West by the Zoroastrian priests of Mithra.

**Acceptance
by the
magi**

**The official
religion
of Persia**

**Zoroastrian
ideas in the
West**

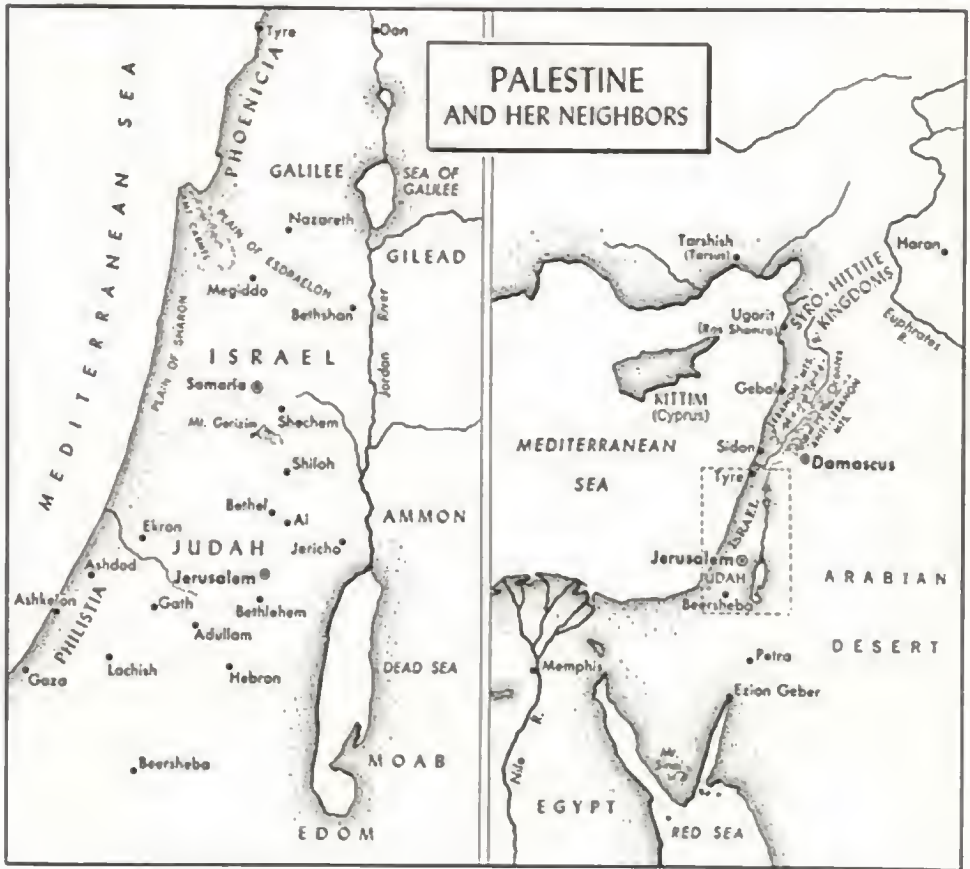
7. THE HEBREWS

Importance of the Hebrews

THE last of the ancient oriental peoples to receive our attention, the Hebrews, seemed quite insignificant to their contemporaries, yet they have left an indelible mark upon all later European civilization. They never were numerous, and in many ways their civilization differed only slightly from that of their Gentile neighbors, but their religious ideas and their religious literature have made them one of the most important peoples of history. No historian of civilization can lightly pass them by.

Palestine

Though the Bible speaks eloquently of Palestine as "a land flowing with milk and honey," this phrase could have occurred only to an inspired patriot or to a wanderer fresh from the desert. Palestine is not a large country. Squeezed between the Mediterranean and the desert, its total area is less than ten thousand square miles (about that of Vermont), much of which is fit only for grazing sheep and goats, and part of which is desert waste. The modern tourist finds its barren limestone hills uninviting, but perhaps they were more pleasant before deforestation and erosion had ruined the land. Today Palestine has a population of perhaps one and a half millions, and in antiquity it probably never supported half that number of people. Nevertheless, Palestine lay across the main road from Egypt to Syria and Assyria, and it therefore was crossed regularly by caravans and armies. Its strategic position made it a place worth holding, and during the greater part of its history it has been a mere appendage to one of the great empires. Only in periods of imperial decay, as for example in the centuries between the Egyptian and Assyrian empires, have the peoples of Palestine enjoyed political independence. In consequence, the Hebrews absorbed much of the civilization of their



neighbors, but they always were sharply critical of what these neighbors had to offer, and they modified what they took to make it fit their own tastes and ideals. More than any other people, they were the spiritual aristocrats of the ancient Orient, and what they passed on to the later world was a highly refined version of ancient oriental civilization.

In the second half of the second millennium before Christ, Palestine was held by Egypt, and countless evidences of this occupation have been unearthed by modern archeologists. The inhabitants of that day, whom the Bible calls Canaanites, were of mixed origin. The majority of these peoples were Semites from the desert to the east, but others were descended from northern invaders such as the Hyksos. The language of the Canaanites was a Semitic dialect closely resembling Phoenician, and recent discoveries have shown how

**Canaanites,
Hyksos,
Egyptians**

closely their social and religious ideas resembled those prevailing in the Phoenician cities up to and including Ugarit.

**Hebrew
invasions**

The early Hebrews were nomads from the desert who filtered into Palestine at various times between 1400 and 1200. The Biblical narrative of the conquest by Joshua gives only part of the story, and while no doubt some Hebrews, before entering Palestine, had been in Egypt and escaped under the leadership of a man named Moses, this story too concerns only a small portion of the invaders. As the Hebrews met strong resistance from the Canaanites, they held only the less desirable hill country at first. Later they fought long and bloody wars with the Philistines, and at last they emerged as victors to dominate all Palestine. At the time of the invasions the Hebrews were composed of many tribes who showed little desire to cooperate with each other. The Philistine wars showed the need for closer unity, however, and shortly before 1000 B.C. a leader named Saul was recognized as king by all the tribes.

**David and
Solomon**

After Saul's death his kingdom fell to David whom the Hebrews ever after considered an ideal king. Countless stories were told of his prowess in war and love, until it is quite impossible today to separate the true from the legendary. It is well established, however, that David and his stalwart general Joab put an end to the Philistines, captured Jerusalem (the last Canaanite stronghold), which they made their capital, and carried their raids as far as the environs of Damascus. When David died, about 960, he was succeeded by his son Solomon. The new king became a typical oriental potentate, ruling his kingdom in splendor equal to that of the other small kingdoms of the Near East. His many wives included a daughter of the Egyptian Pharaoh and a daughter of the king of Tyre. The former marriage alliance enabled him to conduct profitable trading expeditions in the Red Sea area, the latter to send ships as far as Tarshish (Tarsus) in Asia Minor. He built an enormous palace for his wives and concubines, his eunuchs, his ministers, and his bureaucrats, as well as a famous Temple at Jerusalem. Modern archeology brings witness of his grandiose buildings in other parts of his kingdom. In later and less happy times, the Hebrews looked back to Solomon's reign as to a Golden Age when every man dwelt in safety under his own vine and fig tree.

**The fate of
Israel and
Judah**

Solomon died about 935, and almost immediately his kingdom was rent in twain. The northern tribes revolted, under the leadership of a certain Jeroboam, who apparently was encouraged by the king of

Egypt. This new kingdom, called Israel, occupied the better part of Palestine. The two southern tribes remained loyal to the dynasty of David, under Rehoboam, and retained Jerusalem as their capital. Thenceforth their kingdom was called Judah, and the subsequent period of Hebrew history is called that of the Divided Monarchy. For two centuries Israel played a part in oriental politics, along with the other small states, but it was conquered at last by the Assyrians (722). Many of its inhabitants were deported to Mesopotamia, where they were absorbed by other peoples. The tiny kingdom of Judah stretched out its precarious existence a little longer by paying tribute to the Assyrians. A Chaldean king entered the city in 597 and again in 586. On each occasion he deported several thousand persons to Babylonia, but many of these exiles refused to be absorbed by their new neighbors. The years from 586 to 536 are therefore called the period of the Exile.

When Cyrus captured Babylon (538) he treated the Jews with his customary leniency and announced that those who wished might return to Jerusalem. A small band of enthusiasts went back in 536, to be followed by many others during the next century. The old Davidic monarchy was not revived, but the administration of Jerusalem and its surrounding territory (Judea) was entrusted to Jewish priests who were responsible to a Persian satrap resident elsewhere. The Jews accepted this arrangement gladly and led peaceful and obscure lives throughout the duration of Persian rule. After Alexander's death Judea fell to one of his generals, but the local government by priests was not altered. Until the Maccabean revolt of 168 B.C., the Jews continued as peaceful as before. In 135 B.C. a Jewish leader became king over his people, and before 100 his successors ruled all Palestine. The Romans captured this tiny kingdom in 63 B.C. but unrest continued, the Romans finally lost patience, and Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70. Since that catastrophe there has been no Jewish state until the recent establishment of Israel (1948).

*Persian,
Greek, and
Roman rule*

Hebrew Religion

When the Hebrews were nomads in the desert, their civilization was not high, but they learned much from the Canaanites after their entry into Palestine. Adopting a settled life, many Hebrews became farmers rather than herdsmen. This fundamental change revolutionized their manner of life as well as their ways of thinking about the

*The
Hebrews
and
Canaanite
civilization*

world, their fellow men, and the gods. Since the Canaanites had long been familiar with the problems which the Hebrews now faced for the first time, the newcomers often accepted Canaanitish ideas and the Canaanitish way of life. Coming in rather small groups, they found it easy to take over Canaanitish civilization. As a matter of fact, they even abandoned their own dialects in favor of Canaanite, modifying it only slightly to form the classical Hebrew in which they wrote the Old Testament. They used the Phoenician alphabet when making the earliest Hebrew inscriptions, which date from the days of the Divided Monarchy; later they adopted the Aramaic alphabet, out of which they developed the Hebrew characters used today. This readiness of the early Hebrews to accept Canaanitish civilization must constantly be borne in mind if we are to understand Hebrew religious history.

**Yahweh
and the
Baals**

The Hebrew nomads had worshiped a god named Yahweh (often incorrectly written Jehovah) in a manner appropriate to a pastoral people. Their principal festival was held in the spring at the time when lambs were born. The Canaanites, on the other hand, worshiped various vegetation gods and goddesses with festivals at the season of plowing, first fruits, and harvest, and they expected their reward to come in the form of good crops. Taken as a group, the Canaanitish gods were called Baals, or "Lords." When the Hebrews accepted a settled agricultural life they felt a great temptation to abandon Yahweh, who had looked after them in the desert, and instead to worship the Baals, who promised blessings in harmony with agricultural life. Thus a fierce struggle arose between Yahweh and the Baals, which in essence was a struggle between the two civilizations. Many Hebrews simply went over to the Baals; others considered agricultural life incompatible with loyalty to Yahweh and returned to the desert mode of life; and still others, expanding their conception of Yahweh and declaring that he could aid agriculture even better than the Baals themselves, instituted agricultural festivals in his honor. In the end, the latter group won, though at the price of incorporating much Baal worship in the new worship of Yahweh. Many years passed before Yahweh worship was purged of these heathenish features.

**The first
prophets**

In this great struggle a leading part was taken by the Hebrew prophets. The earliest of these differed but little from the holy men of other religions, who gave advice, found lost objects, foretold the future, and performed other services in the name of their deity. The Baals had their prophets, just as Yahweh had his, and the two groups

of prophets became the champions of their respective gods. Thus the prophet Elijah, who lived in Israel about 850, devoted his life to fighting the Baals, their prophets, their worshipers, and especially the Hebrews who had gone over to them. His mighty deeds and his brilliant successes are dutifully recorded in the Old Testament. From early times the prophets had taught that Yahweh expected moral conduct as well as sacrifices from his worshipers, and this aspect of their teaching became more prominent as the Baals were gradually defeated. The earlier prophets wrote nothing themselves, but books about Elijah and others were written by their devoted disciples.

In the eighth century some prophets began issuing their oracles in written form, and their writings are still to be found in the Old Testament. The earliest of the writing prophets was Amos, who lived about 750, but within a few years he was followed by Hosea (c. 740), Isaiah (c. 700), and others. Hosea was still concerned primarily with the wickedness of Baal worship, but Amos and Isaiah were more interested in the misdeeds of those who pretended to worship Yahweh. They grew eloquent when denouncing those Hebrews who ground down the faces of the poor and who substituted incense and Sabbaths for justice and mercy.

*Amos,
Hosea,
Isaiah*

The rise of Assyria and the fall of Israel (722) raised new problems for the prophets and eventually led to a monotheism which proclaimed that Yahweh was the only god in existence. Elijah and his contemporaries had often pictured the Baals as ridiculous and contemptible, but it had never occurred to them to doubt their existence or even their power. They merely declared that Yahweh was more powerful than the Baals and promised that he would look after those who worshiped him aright. Then came the fall of the Northern Kingdom. Judging by the words of the earlier prophets, this catastrophe showed that Yahweh was unable to protect his own people, and many Hebrews made haste to worship the powerful Assur, god of Assyria. The problem was a serious one, but the prophet Isaiah found an answer. He flatly denied that the Assyrian victories were evidence of the superiority of Assur over Yahweh. In fact, Assur had nothing to do with the Assyrian victories, which were due to Yahweh's using the Assyrian armies to punish his people for their sins. The corollary of this doctrine was that by repentance and reform the Hebrews might stop the Assyrian advance, for the Assyrian armies could go only as far as Yahweh wished. "Shall the ax boast itself against him that

*The rise of
monotheism*

heweth therewith?" exclaimed Isaiah. He did not explicitly deny that the god Assur existed, but as that god was powerless, he might as well not exist. Yahweh was the only god that mattered, either for Hebrews or for Assyrians.

Deuteronomy and the prophets

Such reasoning may have encouraged some Hebrews to remain loyal to Yahweh, but it did not convince the kings of Judah, most of whom in the next century worshiped Assur in addition to paying tribute to Assyria. Sometimes the prophets of Yahweh were persecuted, but they continued active, encouraging people to remain loyal to their national god, Yahweh, and drawing up precepts and laws by which the faithful should regulate their lives. These prophets were complete monotheists, and they are sometimes called the Deuteronomists because much of their work now appears in the Biblical book of Deuteronomy. The decline and fall of Assyria helped them tremendously, for it proved that Assur was not so powerful after all. As early as 621 these prophets persuaded the king of Judah to renounce all foreign gods and institute reforms in accord with the prophetic spirit, but this king was killed in battle in 608 and his successors soon relapsed. Then came the crowning tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem and the Exile, which ended a period in the development of the Hebrew religion.

Prophets during the Exile

The Exile had the most far-reaching effects upon the Hebrew faith. Though many Hebrews deserted their people completely, and were absorbed into the general population of Babylonia, others fanatically persevered in Yahweh worship as a sign and symbol of their nationality. Out of the ensuing struggles emerged a new religion, commonly called Judaism. These years produced three of the great Hebrew prophets. Jeremiah had begun to prophesy shortly before the reforms of 621, and he survived the debacle of 586. For him religion was a personal rather than a national affair, and he taught that a man could worship Yahweh regardless of where or under what government he lived. Ezekiel had been a priest at Jerusalem before he was taken to Babylon in 597. He too made the discovery that Yahweh could be worshiped anywhere, but he continued to dream of a liberated and theocratic Jewish state. The third of the great prophets is now called the Second Isaiah because, for some unknown reason, his prophecies now make up the last part of our Book of Isaiah. Prophesying about 540, he appeared as a bringer of good tidings and predicted that Cyrus the Persian would soon liberate the Jews. Being a complete monotheist, he looked on Cyrus as Yahweh's agent, and he foretold a

time when all men would worship Yahweh. He even suggested that the recent trials of the Jews would have a purifying and redemptive effect for all mankind.

The exiles who returned to Jerusalem were deeply religious persons, filled with the ideas of Ezekiel and the earlier prophets, but not always sharing the broad views of Jeremiah and the Second Isaiah. The priests who governed the tiny Jewish state ruled in the name of Yahweh and constructed a theocracy of a type not uncommon in the ancient Orient. They were strict in enforcing ancestral customs such as circumcision and Sabbath observance, and they sought to preserve Jewish racial purity by forbidding intermarriage with Gentiles. The priests formulated and codified these ancient customs in the Mosaic Law (so called because they attributed it all to Moses), which has governed Jewish religious life from that day to this.

*Postexilic
Judaism*

Nevertheless the racial and religious exclusiveness of postexilic Judaism did not pass without a challenge. The author of the charming little story of Ruth reminded his readers that the great David himself was descended from a Moabite woman. The story of Jonah sought to inculcate two important lessons: first, that it is impossible to escape from Yahweh, even in the most remote corner of the earth, and second, that God cared even for the people of Nineveh and would gladly have spared them had they been willing to listen to his prophet. And the last of the prophets, Malachi, foretold a time when men everywhere would unite in the worship of Yahweh. These men believed that the unity and universality of God should unite all men in one great community of worship. This was the greatest triumph of the Hebrews and their greatest contribution to humanity.

*Postexilic
prophets*

The Hebrew Bible

The Hebrews produced the first large and imposing literature in history. Earlier peoples had had their literatures, to be sure, but today these books are read only by scholars. The literature of the Hebrews, on the other hand, has ever since enjoyed a wide popular appeal. We now print this literature in a single volume, called the Bible, or to speak more accurately, in the first part of the Bible, which is called the Old Testament. This Old Testament is the work of many authors, some separated from others by many centuries, and it includes poetry and prose, history and fiction, theology and law. It reflects the long development of Hebrew views on God and the world, on man and

*Content of
the Bible*

society, beginning with the beliefs and aspirations of primitive barbarians and rising to the lofty teachings of the later prophets. It is our principal guide to the history of the Hebrews and to their religion.

The Law

The Hebrews divided their Old Testament into three parts, called respectively the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The first of the five books of the Law, the Book of Genesis, gives the well-known legends about the creation of the world, the first man Adam, Noah and the Flood, Abraham and his descendants, and the Hebrews in Egypt; and the Book of Exodus tells of the escape of the Hebrews under Moses. The passages dealing with the earliest times so closely resemble Sumerian myths on the same subject that it is impossible to doubt their common origin. The Hebrews probably learned these stories from Sumerians or Semites while still wandering in the desert, wanderings which have reflected in the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The Hebrew version of these legends probably was written down for the first time in the ninth and eighth centuries, in many independent narratives. Later these narratives were collected and edited time and time again by the prophets. The last of the five books of the Law, Deuteronomy, was the work of the prophets of the seventh century, and the intervening books (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers) give the Law as codified by postexilic priests. The laws were collected from many different sources (one long passage closely resembles part of the code of Hammurabi), and there was much editing. At last, in postexilic times, all these various materials were woven together to form our present five books.

The

Prophets

The Hebrew Bible divides the Prophetic books into two groups. The Former Prophets are historical books, tracing Hebrew history from the entrance into Palestine down to 586. These books are well called prophetic, for they were written by the prophets, and their contents were selected and arranged to illustrate the prophetic teachings about Yahweh and his care for his people when they obeyed him, his punishments when they did not. The Later Prophets are the writings of the prophets from Amos to Malachi. They include the three "Major Prophets" (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) as well as the twelve "Minor Prophets." Here too there has been much editing, and there are many passages which cannot properly be assigned to the man whose name the book bears. Thus the prophecies of the Second Isaiah (see page 86), as well as others from still later writers, are included in our Book of Isaiah.



THE NEAR EAST
1000-500 B.C.

The last part of the Hebrew Bible, called the Writings, contains matters of a more miscellaneous sort. The Psalms were hymns edited for use in the Second Temple, built after the Exile; though legend attributed them all to David, most of the Psalms were of much later origin, and a few date only from the second century before Christ. The Proverbs, bits of homely wisdom, are very difficult to date: some passages closely resemble similar Egyptian books. Ruth, Esther, and Job may be classified as works of fiction written for purposes of edification. The Book of Daniel, written about 166 B.C., takes the form of a series of visions of the future, but it has never been accepted as prophetic by the Jews. The Hebrew Old Testament closes with the Book of Chronicles, a recapitulation of Hebrew history written from the point of view of the postexilic priests.

*The
Writings*

As the Old Testament is a collection of books, not one single book, the problem arose as to which works should be included. The list of those selected is called the "canon," and both Jews and Christians came to regard the books thus listed as inspired Scriptures. The first to be admitted to the canon were the books of the Law, whose special position has always been recognized by Jews. The other two groups were added later, and the whole canon was settled shortly before the time of Christ. This canon is the one followed in Jewish and Protestant Bibles today, though the various books of the Prophets and Writings are arranged in different sequence in the two versions.

*The canon
of the
Scriptures*

After Alexander the Great many Jews migrated to Egypt and other parts of the Greek world, where they presently forgot the Hebrew language. The Old Testament was therefore translated into Greek for their benefit. This translation, called the Septuagint because it allegedly was the work of seventy (*septuaginta* in Latin) scholars, was made in the third and second centuries before Christ. Before it was completed, Jews in Palestine or Egypt had written various books not recognized as canonical by the conservative leaders in Palestine, but accepted none the less by the Greek-speaking Jews. This Greek canon was accepted by the early Christians. About A.D. 400 a Christian scholar named Jerome translated the Bible into Latin. With some reluctance he included the extra books in the Greek canon, and his Latin version (known as the Vulgate) is the basis of modern Catholic Bibles. The early Protestants returned to the Jewish canon, but Luther and other translators put the extra books in a special section, bound between the Old and the New Testaments and called the "Apocrypha." These nine books still appear in some Protestant Bibles.

*The
Apocrypha*



Parthenon (Ewing Gelloray)



THE GREEK MIRACLE

THE GREEK STATES—GREEK CULTURE

B.C.	Military and Political Events	Cultural Events	Contemporary Events
3000–2000		Early Minoan	Old Kingdom [Egypt]
2000	Achaean invasions	Middle Minoan	Middle Kingdom
1400	Fall of Cnassus	Late Minoan	Egyptian Empire
1200	Fall of Troy	Mycenaean	Hittite Empire
1100–800	Dorian Invasions	Dark Ages	Phoenician traders
800–700	Spartan conquests	"Homer," Hesiod	Assyrian Empire
800	Unification of Attica	Greek Renaissance	
750–500	Colonial expansion City states, tyrants	Coinage in Greece	Hebrew Prophets
600–500	Solon, Peisistratus	Pre-Socratic philosophers	Cyrus the Persian
508	Cleisthenes		Roman Republic founded
490–480	Persian Wars		Darius, Xerxes
477–461	Cimon (Delian League)	Aeschylus	
461–429	Pericles "Golden Age"	Sophists, Sophocles Herodotus, Phidias	
431–404	Peloponnesian War	Euripides, Aristophanes Socrates, Thucydides	
404–362	Spartan and Theban hegemonies	Isocrates Plato	
359–336	Philip of Macedon	Aristotle	
336–323	Alexander the Great		
300–200	Hellenistic Empires	Epicurus, Zeno Eratosthenes Archimedes, Euclid	Rome conquers Italy Punic Wars
200–167	Macedonian Wars Pydna	Polybius	Judas Maccabaeus

8. THE GREEK STATES

WHEN the early Egyptian and Sumerian civilizations were in their prime, Europe's population still had only simple neolithic cultures. In the days of the Egyptian Empire, however, higher civilizations appeared in Crete and Greece; in the days of the Assyrians, the Greeks began their rapid cultural progress, learning much from their oriental neighbors; and while the Persians were ruling Asia and Egypt, the Greeks were creating a civilization far more brilliant than any known to the Orient. This civilization, combining Western elements with Eastern, was later absorbed by Rome and thus became the foundation upon which our own is built.

*Beginnings
of Greek
civilization*

The homeland of the Greeks was not large and it was poor. It consisted of the Greek peninsula, the islands of the Aegean Sea, and the western coast of Asia Minor. The total area of these regions (less than fifty thousand square miles, of which about half is on the European continent) approximates that of New York State. Moreover, Greece is so mountainous that barely a fifth of its area can be brought under the plow, and her soil, even in the few plains and valley bottoms, is not comparable in fertility to that of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Greek farmers have always had to struggle with poverty. The mountains also divide Greece into countless valleys whose inhabitants have always feared and suspected their neighbors, and a similar narrowness dominated the minds of the islanders. Whatever unity the ancient Greeks possessed was cultural, not political, and their incessant quarrels amongst themselves finally brought them to ruin.

*Poverty
of Greece*

The sea was the salvation of Greece. When poverty-stricken farmers tired of trying to wring a scanty living from their barren lands, they often took to the sea, sometimes as pirates, sometimes as traders, and sometimes as colonists migrating to foreign shores. They thus spread

The sea

their culture and their influence over the whole Mediterranean basin, but first they civilized themselves. As Greece faces eastward, with her mountainous backbone in the west and with most of her good harbors on the Aegean side, these prehistoric forays and trading expeditions led adventurous mariners along the southern coasts of Asia Minor to Syria and Egypt, where they found undreamt-of wealth and culture. The East brought them into contact with the arts of civilization, and their quick minds absorbed and improved upon whatever seemed good to them. Their achievements have been admired by civilized men ever since, and their skill in literature and the fine arts, in science, and in philosophy has caused later thinkers to speak reverently of "the Greek miracle."

THE EARLY CIVILIZATIONS OF GREECE

Troy and the Trojan War

The Greeks of classic times began their history with the Trojan War, in which the Greeks, led by Agamemnon of Mycenae, captured and destroyed Troy, a city in northwestern Asia Minor. The story of this war was told by the poet Homer in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and ancient writers fixed the date 1184 B.C. for the fall of Troy. When skeptical historians in the nineteenth century expressed doubts as to the historicity of this war, the German archeologist Heinrich Schliemann decided to dig at the alleged site of Troy and see what he could find (1870). To his amazement, he found the ruins of nine cities, each superimposed upon its predecessors, and he proclaimed that the second from the bottom—now known as "Troy II"—was the Homeric Troy. He was mistaken, and archeologists now identify "Troy VIIa" with the city described by Homer. Pottery and other evidence indicate that this city was destroyed about 1200 B.C. Troy I, at the bottom of the heap, was a neolithic village dated after 3000; Troy II, an important Bronze Age city surrounding a strong citadel, was destroyed about 2000; Troy III, IV, and V were only villages; but Troy VI was another important city, destroyed by earthquake about 1300, and rebuilt almost at once as the Troy VIIa that was sacked and burned about 1200. These Bronze Age cities first showed modern scholars that the Aegean area had been the scene of a high civilization almost a thousand years before the Trojan War. Subsequent explorations have unearthed the ruins of rather similar and contemporary civilizations at Mycenae and elsewhere in Greece, and especially in Crete.

The Greeks of historic times knew something about an ancient kingdom in Crete and told strange stories about the amazing brilliance of its civilization. A British archeologist, Sir Arthur Evans, working in the opening years of the present century, proved that these legends were not without historical foundation. There actually was a high civilization in Crete in the second millennium before Christ, and as the legends told of a certain King Minos who once ruled there, modern scholars call this early Cretan civilization "Minoan."

The men who created the Minoan civilization had crossed the sea from the southwestern tip of Asia Minor, perhaps as early as 4000 B.C., and somewhat later kindred peoples occupied the neighboring Aegean Islands and southern Greece. The invaders brought with them a simple neolithic civilization, and more than a thousand years were to pass before they improved upon it greatly by the use of metal,

**Minoan
civilization
in Crete**

**The first
Cretans**



better ships, and trade. In the days of the Old Kingdom (3000-2250) in Egypt an occasional Cretan trader would visit there, or an Egyptian mariner might reach Crete, but contacts between the two peoples were few and far between. After 2000 B.C., however, communication became more frequent, as is proved by the many articles of Egyptian origin found in Crete and Cretan articles found in Egypt. But while the Cretans traded with Egypt, and doubtless learned much from the Egyptians, they were the creators of a distinctly new civilization.

**Crete's day
of glory**

The center of Minoan civilization was at Cnossus, a city located in the north-central part of Crete not far from the Aegean shore. Here an enormous palace served as royal residence and housed the government offices. Erected about 1800, this building was shaken down by an earthquake some two centuries later but was restored almost at once. The whole of Cnossus was sacked by invaders about 1400, after which the city was never rebuilt. Ruins at other sites show that a decadent Minoan civilization persisted for another three centuries, but the island was overrun and its civilization destroyed by barbarian invaders about 1100. Minoan civilization thus flourished through the second millennium, with its climax coinciding with that of the Egyptian Empire about 1600-1400 B.C.

**Peace and
prosperity**

As the numerous cities of Crete had virtually no fortifications, and as their ruins contain few weapons of any sort, life on the island must have been eminently peaceful. The resulting economic prosperity of the people is evidenced by their large and elaborate buildings, by their wealth in gold and other precious materials, and by their leisure and refinement. As agriculture could not have drawn such wealth from the rather poor soil of Crete, this prosperity must be attributed in large measure to industry and trade. Articles of Cretan manufacture are found in all the countries bordering on the eastern Mediterranean, from Egypt and Syria to Sicily and the northern shores of the Adriatic. Moreover, the old Greek legends spoke of a Cretan *thalassocracy*, or "empire of the sea." This Cretan empire must have been commercial and naval rather than political, for it is very doubtful whether the Cretans ever held political sway outside their own island. Nevertheless, Cretan culture leavened the whole central Mediterranean region and started Europe on the path toward civilization.

Cnossus

Archeologists often use superlative terms when describing Minoan civilization, and the palace at Cnossus has especially elicited their

admiration. Built around a central courtyard, this palace covered about six acres, and parts of it were several stories high. There were living rooms, reception rooms, storerooms, offices, stairways, and even baths with running hot and cold water and an elaborate system of drains. Often the walls were decorated with magnificent paintings



CRETAN THRONE. The chair was a throne, while nobles sat on the benches around the wall. The fresco is restored in part.

while pottery and other small objects testify to the artistic skill of their makers. Outside the palace proper were the homes of the common people of Knossos, who may have numbered as many as 100,000. Providing regular supplies of food for so vast a multitude of bureaucrats, tradesmen, clerks, and industrial workers must have required a highly complicated economic organization.

Economic prosperity gave the Cretans, or at least the upper classes among them, ample leisure for amusement and recreation. There were outdoor theaters for religious or dramatic performances and for athletic contests. The Cretans loved dancing and music, and they played various wind and stringed instruments. Their religion was a development of the old neolithic worship of Mother Earth, laying special emphasis upon such matters as sin and punishment, purification and immortality. The palace and private houses had rooms used as chapels, with altars and other religious symbols, but so far as we

**Culture and
refinement**

know, whole buildings were never set apart as temples or churches. Thousands of clay tablets covered with writing have been found, but as yet no one has succeeded in deciphering the Minoan script. It seems likely, however, that most of the tablets are receipts, inventories, orders, and other governmental or business documents rather than literary works. The Cretans undoubtedly had a literature but, like the Sumerian epics, it was recited rather than read.

Minoan civilization flourished only in Crete, but many of its features were carried by traders and emigrants to the Aegean Islands and the mainland of Greece. As the early inhabitants of these regions shared the primitive cultural background of their Cretan cousins, they found it easy to absorb much Minoan civilization, and from them

*The legacy
of Crete*



CRETAN CUP. This cup, from Hagia Triada, is decorated with scenes of boxing, bull-leaping, and other athletic events.

the historic Greeks inherited much. This Greek inheritance from Crete has many proofs, perhaps the most eloquent of which is to be found in the Greek language itself. Like most languages spoken in Europe today, ancient Greek was descended from a dialect once spoken in central Europe, but it contained many strange words and forms not found in kindred tongues. A large number of these words were of Minoan origin. Among them may be mentioned words for various types of clothing, house decorations, jewelry, and pottery; others deal with trade and include the words for sea, pilot, mast, road, bridge, and wagon; still others include words used in music and song, or connected with religion, such as *pure*, *prayer*, and *hymn*, and among them is the Greek word for peace. If we assume that, along with the word, the Greeks also took over the thing or the idea from their Cretan predecessors, we catch a glimpse of Crete's wide influence upon later Greek civilization.

The Achaeans and Mycenaean Civilization

While the Cretans were enjoying this brilliant civilization, a group of peoples known as the Achaeans were slowly advancing into Greece from the north. This invasion was part of a much wider folk movement. We have already seen (page 22) how, about 2500 B.C., Nordic invaders subjugated the Alpine peoples who had long dwelt in central Europe between the Rhine and the Danube. The conquerors set themselves up as an aristocracy, imposing their language and many of their institutions upon their subjects, but in the course of centuries a general fusion of blood and culture took place. Economic life and agricultural methods remained on a rather primitive plane, however, and presently central Europe became overpopulated. Bands of adventurers then began seeking new homes. They were aided greatly in their conquests by their bronze swords, which were superior to any weapons possessed by their victims, and their horses gave them a further advantage.

Among these central Europeans were the Achaeans, who began entering Greece from the Danube Valley shortly after 2000 B.C. Their progress was slow, and not until some three centuries later did they advance in numbers into central and southern Greece. Eventually, however, they occupied the whole peninsula, subjugating the earlier Minoan inhabitants, setting themselves up as a ruling aristocracy, imposing their Aryan language (the ancestor of classical and modern

**The Nordics
in Europe**

**Invasion
of Greece
by the
Achaeans**

Greek) upon their conquered subjects, but at the same time learning much from them. Their principal center was at Mycenae (wherefore their civilization is called "Mycenaean"), but they left their traces in almost every part of the Greek peninsula. Greece itself was neither large enough nor rich enough to satisfy their ambition, however, and presently they began making piratical raids across the Aegean. It was they who destroyed Cnossus about 1400, and a little later we find the Hittites complaining of their raids along the southern coast of Asia Minor. In the next century they even reached Egypt, and the most famous of all their raids was the one against Troy which was immortalized by Homer's *Iliad*.

Mycenae

Mycenae was the most important city of Greece, and its ruins remain the most impressive of that age, but its rulers apparently did not exercise political authority over the whole peninsula. They undoubtedly were the richest and most powerful lords in Greece, and they may well have been leaders in such joint enterprises as the Trojan War, but there were countless fortified places in Greece whose possessors could have defied Mycenae at will. These lesser kings and nobles must have enjoyed a large degree of independence.

Achaean and Minoan civilization

The Achaean aristocrats were primarily fighters and landowners, and their early civilization was much simpler than the Minoan civilization of their subjects. They were intelligent enough to recognize and value the arts of civilization, however, and they allowed their subjects to follow trade and other ignoble pursuits. Mycenaean palaces were built by Minoan workmen and decorated by Minoan artists, but they betray the owner's barbaric conception of splendor. They were lavishly embellished with gold and precious stones, and even in the wall paintings military and hunting scenes predominate, as opposed to the peaceful scenes depicted in the palaces of Crete. Minoan artists painted the pictures, but their Achaean lords told them what to paint. They wrote their Greek language on clay tablets, using modified Minoan characters which have recently been deciphered (1953), but even if Achaeans or Minoans were able to write the Greek language, they rarely did so.

Dorian invasions of Greece

Mycenaean power reached its peak between 1400 and 1200 B.C., and about 1100 it was completely destroyed by Dorian invaders. The Dorians were distantly related to the Achaeans, having come like them from central Europe. While the Achaeans were invading Greece, the Dorians settled in the northwestern part of the Balkan Peninsula. About 1100 they again began moving south, however, and presently



FRESCO FROM TIRYNS. This fresco was undoubtedly the work of a Cretan artist, but the scene (hunting a wild boar) was quite Achaean. (National Museum, Athens)

they had occupied the greater part of Greece. Some crossed the water and overran Crete while others occupied Rhodes and still others reached Cyprus. Sometimes the Achaeans managed to hold their own, especially in the more mountainous regions, but many were forced to flee to the Aegean Islands or the western part of Asia Minor, which thereafter was called Ionia. In later times the cities of Ionia were among the most important in the Greek world. As the Dorians were far more barbaric than the Achaeans, they destroyed civilization wherever they went, and their raids were followed by three hundred years of darkness.

At about the same time other Europeans invaded Asia Minor from Thrace and overthrew the decadent Hittite Empire (see page 65). Some of these invaders established the Phrygian kingdom, in central Asia Minor, while others established Lydia in the west. The newcomers from Europe then dominated the western half of Asia Minor.

*Phrygians
and
Lydians*

THE EARLY POLITICAL HISTORY OF GREECE

The Dorian invasions destroyed what little political unity Greece may have enjoyed in Mycenaean times, and for the next three cen-

*The Greek
Renaissance*

turies local chieftains lorded it over the peasants in each tiny valley. Industry and commerce virtually disappeared, yet some things survived this Dorian darkness: the Greek language, various religious beliefs and practices, old tales and legends, and the memory of a glorious past—especially the Trojan War—all of which were passed down from generation to generation and became the heritage of classic Greece. When this darkness at last began to break, a new dawn of civilization brought what we may call the “Greek Renaissance.” This period in Greek history, beginning about 800 B.C., was characterized by a revival of industry and commerce, by the establishment of overseas colonies, by the appearance of new forms of political organization and government, by a religious revolution, by the beginnings of philosophic and scientific thought, and by great achievements in literature and art. After three centuries of this steady progress came the Greek classic age of the fifth century.

**Trade and
colonies**

Phoenician traders had begun to visit the Aegean region in the ninth century, bringing with them new commodities and new ideas of many sorts. They helped shake Greece out of her Dorian slumbers, and before the end of the eighth century Greek mariners were visiting all the regions once visited by the Cretans. When the Phoenician cities were conquered by the Assyrians (about 750), their commerce was impeded, and much of their commercial empire fell to the waiting Greeks. Overcrowded Greece then began sending colonists to the



lands her mariners had visited. As these colonists were peasant-farmers, the colonies at first were agricultural settlements. Sites were chosen where good land was available, preferably not far from Greece herself. The earliest colonies were located along the northern shores of the Aegean, but before long others were established along the Hellespont and still others on the shores of the Black Sea. Meantime other Greeks sailed west to found colonies in southern Italy and Sicily, or went south to Cyrene in North Africa. By 600 there was a Greek colony near Marseilles, whence daughter colonies spread along the Riviera and into northern Spain.

The leader or founder of the colony selected a suitable site, enrolled colonists, secured ships for transportation, divided the land among the settlers, drew up laws and established religious ceremonies for the colony, and ruled it thereafter. The settlers in any given colony might come from different parts of Greece, but they sailed from only a few places. The colonists later called this port of embarkation their *metropolis*, or "mother city." The metropolis retained no political control over the colony, but it profited nonetheless. Though the colonies at first were purely agricultural, enterprising colonists presently began trading with natives in their vicinity, and before long they had built up commercial empires. The metropolis prospered from this colonial expansion because colonial traders usually sent back to their mother city for stocks of merchandise.

**Organiza-
tion of a
colony**

Trade was further promoted by several other events of the time, the chief of which were the invention of the Greek alphabet, the introduction of standard weights and measures, and the invention of money. While there was writing in Mycenaean Greece, the art was completely forgotten after the Dorian invasions, and not until after 800 did it reappear. The Greeks then learned to write their language with a new alphabet based on that of the Phoenicians. Probably the new writing was first used by businessmen to keep their records; later it became known to the rulers; and last of all literary men used it to record their works. The new weights and measures likewise came from the Orient, showing their origin by their Semitic names and by their use of the old Sumerian method of counting by sixties. In early times trade was conducted only by barter, but presently merchants began using gold and silver as mediums of exchange. At first they used nuggets or bars of the metal valued according to weight, which were weighed every time they changed hands. Assyrian kings began stamping marks on such bars to indicate their purity, and the kings

**Writing,
measures,
money**

of Lydia cast gold and silver coins of standard values. The first mint in Greece was set up about 670, and in later times Greek coins circulated far and wide, greatly aiding Greek merchants in their quest for markets.

Merchants and City-States

The rise of cities

One of the first results of the progress of trade in Greece was the rise of cities. Heretofore the Greek farmers had lived in villages scattered here and there over the landscape. In every region, however, there was a fortified hilltop known as the *acropolis*. This hilltop was surrounded by a stockade or wall, within which were the residence of the local noble, temples, storehouses, and perhaps a few other public buildings. Here the peasants might take refuge, with their cattle and other movables, in case of hostile invasion. In time of peace the acropolis served as the center of community life for the whole region until the rise of trade changed everything. The traders needed a large open market place, or *agora*, where they might display and exchange their wares, and often they located it at the foot of the acropolis. Gradually the center of community life was transferred from the acropolis to the agora. Public buildings and temples were erected around the market place, and at a greater distance were the residences of merchants and the workshops of artisans. This collection of buildings was known as the "city," and the acropolis became little more than a religious center.

City-states

Each noble had held political power over several nearby villages, together with the surrounding fields, and in the new day these political bonds were retained in order that the city dwellers might have a sure food supply. The whole political unit—acropolis, city, villages, and fields—was called a *polis* or "city-state," which form of political organization remained standard in Greece for many centuries. The Greek city-states varied greatly in size. The largest was Sparta, which held about 3250 square miles (approximately two-thirds the area of Connecticut), but it was not a typical city-state. The next largest states were Athens, with nearly a thousand square miles (less than the area of Rhode Island), and Corinth with about three hundred. Many city-states occupied only twenty or thirty square miles. It is quite impossible to estimate the total number of such city-states in the Greek world, but there must have been more than a hundred, all independent of each other and all fiercely jealous of their "freedom."

Members of the new commercial and industrial classes soon began to find the rule of the old nobility extremely irksome. The nobles prided themselves on being fighters and heroes, and they derived their income from fields worked by their peasants. They therefore had little sympathy with the commercial classes; they were jealous of the wealth so ostentatiously paraded by upstarts; and sometimes they bankrupted themselves trying to surpass the magnificence of the merchants. They then attempted to recoup themselves at the expense of their rivals, sometimes through brigandage and sometimes through the more devious arts of taxation. The merchants, on the other hand, resented nearly everything about the nobles—their constant wars with each other in which the merchants suffered as innocent bystanders, their violence and taxation, their reluctance to provide the public works needed for the new cities, their inability to assure law and order, their venality, their pretensions to social superiority. Able and ambitious men of the merchant class therefore undertook to bring the nobles to heel.

*Merchants
hostile to
the nobles*

These various factors worked together to give Greek traders and businessmen an attitude toward government in general that differed greatly from that of their predecessors in the ancient Orient. Conducting their businesses to suit themselves, they wished to have no dealings with royal or priestly bureaucracies like those that dominated the economic life of early Egypt and Babylonia. When the rule of the old Greek nobility became intolerable to the merchants, what they demanded was freedom from the government rather than control of it. They developed a spirit of free enterprise that eventually colored all Greek life, and Greece, the birthplace of economic liberty, presently became the mother of political and intellectual liberty as well.

*"Free
enterprise"*

The overthrow of the old nobility was greatly facilitated by new developments in the art of war. In Dorian, as in Mycenaean, times the Greek nobility had fought hand to hand or from chariots, with one champion challenging another to personal combat, while his followers were an ill-armed and ill-trained rabble of no great military value. By 700, however, there were considerable bodies of heavy infantry, known as "hoplites," who advanced in close formation and fought with sword and spear. They easily drove the old-style armies from the field. The new armor and weapons were expensive, though not so expensive as the equipment of a champion of the old sort. Sometimes individual members of the merchant class equipped themselves as hoplites, but more commonly enterprising leaders raised,

*Progress
in the art
of war*

equipped, and drilled companies of mercenaries. The merchants then hired these companies, paying them with coin. The nobles, on the other hand, rarely had the ready cash for such expenditures. Armies of hoplites destroyed the military power of the old aristocracy, and political power fell to new rulers of the type that the Greeks called "tyrants."

Greek Tyrants

"Tyrant" defined

At first the Greek word "tyrant" did not carry the unpleasant associations that it has today. The early tyrants were not necessarily cruel or arbitrary, nor did their rule necessarily rest upon terrorism and violence: the old aristocrats had probably been as guilty as the early tyrants in these various ways, and only after a century or two did many Greek tyrants come to deserve their later reputation. The important thing about the tyrant was that he governed for the benefit of the new merchant and artisan classes. He may have seized power with the aid of mercenary hoplites and killed or exiled many aristocrats, but his power, once established, rested with the citizens. The tyrants made it their business to modernize their cities. As the old laws of an agricultural age no longer sufficed, the tyrants issued new codes more appropriate to the new age, and their codes were written down, not entrusted as heretofore to the memories of aristocratic magistrates. Religious rites and ceremonies likewise profited by drastic reform. In these matters the tyrants merely followed the example of colonial leaders in disregarding the dead hand of tradition that had formerly dominated legal and religious practice. At the same time the tyrants spent large sums of money—often their own money—on such public works as agoras, aqueducts, sewers, roads, and temples. When these measures had assured the favor of the commercial classes, the masses were easily won over by steady employment, elaborate shows, gifts. The arts of the demagogue also proved helpful.

Agrarian Sparta

While the commercial and industrial classes were thus replacing their aristocratic rulers with tyrants, the old aristocracy was holding its own in the predominantly agricultural areas of Greece. Leadership in the aristocratic struggle against tyranny fell to Sparta, a state occupying a large and fertile valley of southern Greece. Though other Greek states were relieving the pressure of population by sending out colonies or developing trade, the Spartans preferred conquering their

neighbors. Before 700 B.C. they had occupied the whole southern half of the Peloponnesus, and to retain it they committed themselves to a militaristic and agrarian economy. Under the new regime the population was divided into three classes: the Spartan aristocracy; the *perioikoi*—or “dwellers around”—who were second-class citizens, owning their own fields and conducting what little trade was deemed necessary; and the “helots,” who were serfs working on the estates of the aristocrats. The Spartan aristocracy made up the army and conducted the government. All males of this class were trained from childhood to be hoplites, military virtues were emphasized at the expense of all others, and Sparta became an enormous barracks governed with an iron discipline. The Spartan army was the best in Greece, but the arts of civilization were allowed to languish. For a long time the Spartan system produced victorious armies, but it could not produce leaders with the vision or intelligence to use these victories wisely. In the end, even the army itself collapsed.

Tyranny reached the peak of its popularity in Greece toward the middle of the sixth century and then began to decline. At about the same time the aristocrats, under Spartan leadership, had solidified their position, but they usually were disinclined to aggressive action against the tyrants. Old controversies seemingly were worn out by 500, and Greek political life was turning in new directions. In Athens, democracy was replacing tyranny, and in the aristocratic states there was a rising enthusiasm for Panhellenism or the political union of all Greeks. (The Greeks called themselves “Hellenes,” and *pan* means “all.”) Then came the Persian invasions of Greece in 490 and 480, which turned the history of Greece in new directions.

**Rise of
democracy**

The Persian Wars

We have seen how Cyrus of Persia conquered Lydia in 546 and soon thereafter added the Greek cities of Ionia to his domains (page 75). As inclusion within his empire made these cities the economic outlet of western and central Asia Minor, and presently opened to them the ports of Phoenicia and Egypt as well, the Ionians did not suffer materially; and as the Persians left local government to Greek tyrants, the cities at first were not dissatisfied. In 499, however, the Greek ruler of Miletus rose in revolt and the rebellion quickly spread to other Ionian cities. Not until five years later did the Persians restore order by destroying Miletus.

**Persians
in Ionia**



**Darius and
Athens**

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities, the Ionian rebels begged aid of the Greek states. Sparta refused to intervene, but Athens sent twenty ships. This gesture was of little help to the Ionians, for the ships were soon withdrawn, but it annoyed the Persians. During the next few years Athens was in great political ferment, and various leaders sought to gain popularity by declaiming against Persia. When reports of this agitation reached Persia, the king (Darius I) began to fear that if his Ionian subjects revolted again, Greek aid might be more effective than it had been in 498. He therefore decided that the Greek states must be humbled if Ionia was to remain secure. He sent ambassadors to Greece in 491 to demand "earth and water" as symbols of subservience. When these ambassadors reached Athens they were promptly murdered by the irate populace.

**Marathon
(490)**

A year later, in 490, Darius sent a military and naval force across the Aegean to avenge this insult. The army landed at Marathon, an Attic village some twenty-five miles from Athens, where it was de-

feated by an Athenian army under Miltiades. The Persians then returned to Asia. A tiny Greek state had withstood and defeated the armed forces of the mightiest empire on earth, and Marathon justly remains one of the most famous battles in history.

Darius died four years later, apparently having made no plans for further operations against Greece, but his son Xerxes I prepared a great expedition to punish her insolence. He launched his attack in 480. The Greeks later assigned fantastic size to his army, which may have numbered about 250,000 men and 1000 ships. After crossing the Hellespont on a bridge of boats, the army advanced through Macedonia and invaded Greece from the north. The Spartan king vainly attempted to hold the pass at Thermopylae with 300 Spartans and 700 allies, all of whom were killed. Xerxes then entered Athens, but a few days later the Athenians destroyed his navy in a battle fought (September, 480) near the island of Salamis, offshore from Athens. Xerxes then withdrew part of his army from Greece, and the rest was driven out in 479.

**Thermop-
ylae and
Salamis
(480)**

ATHENS

The Athenians had won the battle of Marathon almost unaided, and while troops from many Greek states cooperated in the second war, Athens claimed the victory as hers. The resulting enthusiasm brought her great prestige, and throughout the remainder of the fifth century Athens was the most distinguished city in Greece. It was during this period that her democracy and her civilization reached their greatest heights. But as her glory had been prepared by her earlier history, we must summarize this history before describing Athenian achievements in the classic fifth century.

**Athenian
leadership
in Greece**

The acropolis of Athens stands about four miles inland from the southern coast of Attica, a peninsula jutting eastward from Greece into the Aegean. Attica was inhabited in Mycenaean times, and as it was cut off from the rest of the mainland by mountains, it suffered less than other regions from the Dorian invaders. The soil of Attica is poor, even for Greece, agriculture never prospered, and in early times the region was economically backward. Men presently learned, however, that they could exploit other natural resources. Potters found the clay excellent for ceramics; valuable silver deposits were discovered; olive trees and vines on the hill slopes could produce excellent oil and wine in quantities sufficient for export; and good

Attica



harbors could be built not far from the city. Nevertheless, Attica could not support a large population until the middle of the sixth century, when her rulers learned to import grain from abroad and pay for it with manufactured goods. Athens then became one of the principal commercial centers of the Greek world.

Attica
united by
Athens

In the dark days after the fall of Mycenae the population of Attica, like that of all Greece, had lived in countless tiny villages, each ruled by a local aristocrat. These villages were gradually united under a king at Athens, unification being completed shortly before 800. At first the king governed with the aid of an aristocratic council known

as the "Areopagus," which presently got the upper hand and deprived him of most of his power. Thereafter, the government was conducted by the aristocrats. They annually elected the principal magistrate, called the "archon," from their own number. Members of this aristocratic class were called *eupatrids*, or "sons of good fathers," and the free citizens beneath them were divided into classes according to their wealth.

The beginnings of trade brought new commercial and industrial classes who, in Athens as elsewhere, disliked the aristocracy and hankered after tyranny. An unsuccessful attempt to establish such a government in 632 was followed a few years later by minor reforms, but the first statesman seriously to check the aristocrats was Solon (c. 638-559). Though born a *eupatrid*, Solon had made a fortune by trade. He was a regularly chosen archon for 594, and during his year in office he effected many reforms. All citizens were allowed to attend an Assembly, or "Ekklesia," which voted laws prepared by a Council of Four Hundred, chosen from all except the poorest class of citizens. The number of archons was raised to nine, and the office was thrown open to rich men who were not *eupatrids*. Various economic reforms improved the status of the poor, weakened the economic power of the *eupatrids*, and encouraged trade. Solon refused to set himself up as tyrant, however, and after his year in office he withdrew from political life and, for a while, even from Attica.

**Solon's
reforms**

As Solon's reforms introduced a period of commercial prosperity and expansion, demands again arose for a tyrant who would govern in the new spirit. A certain Peisistratus seized the city in 561 but was soon driven out; a year later he returned and held the city for five years; and in 546 he established his third and last tyranny. He ruled thereafter until his death in 527, and his sons remained in power until 510. Though in the final analysis his rule rested upon popular favor and his mercenaries, Peisistratus governed primarily in the interests of the commercial and industrial classes, and he brought such prosperity to Athens that men later compared his reign to the mythical Golden Age. He also founded an Athenian empire by establishing colonies along the Hellespont, and he began importing large amounts of grain from the Crimea. His colonies differed from those of earlier times in that the colonists retained Athenian citizenship and served as military outposts to protect Athens' new life line to the Black Sea. Peisistratus also devoted much attention and money to the physical improvement of the city, building roads, sewers, an agora, and an

**Peisistratus
as tyrant**

aqueduct, as well as temples and other public buildings. His prestige was so high that he had all the power he wanted without bothering to change Solon's constitution. His two sons ruled jointly until one was murdered by personal enemies in 514. The other brother, Hippias, badly frightened by this crime, became so suspicious and cruel that he was driven out in 510. A new constitution was then arranged by an aristocrat named Cleisthenes (508).

Athenian Democracy

Cleisthenes

Cleisthenes belonged to an ancient family that had long been at odds with the other aristocrats, but in later times he came to be regarded as "the father of Athenian democracy." By an extensive revision of the old constitution, the magistracies were opened to all but the poorest citizens, and rapid rotation in office enabled a large number of citizens to get practical experience in administration as well as direct knowledge of the problems of government. The Assembly, in which all citizens might vote, had the last word in matters of policy. Cleisthenes' system remained the basis of Athenian democracy thereafter.

Factions in Athens

During the next several years Athens was given over to political controversy in which domestic and foreign policy were inextricably commingled. There were three political factions in the city, partisans respectively of tyranny, of aristocracy, and of democracy. Those who favored tyranny also favored Persia, hoping that Darius would restore Peisistratus' son Hippias to power: the exiled Hippias actually guided the Persian armies to Marathon. The democrats favored the Ionian rebels: it apparently was they who sent the twenty ships to aid Ionia, while the partisans of Hippias later secured their recall. At first the aristocrats were inclined to neutrality, but after 493 they were led by Miltiades, who had personal reasons for hating the Persians. He commanded the Athenian army at Marathon, but he died in 489, leaving the aristocracy temporarily without a leader. In the period between the two Persian wars the leading politician at Athens was the democrat Themistocles (c. 527-460). He built the navy which he commanded at Salamis. Soon after the war, however, he fell into disfavor, was exiled, fled to Persia, and eventually died in the service of the Persian king. In spite of this tragic end, Themistocles was a brilliant man and stands among the greatest of Greek statesmen.

Cimon

The presence of Hippias with the Persian army at Marathon so

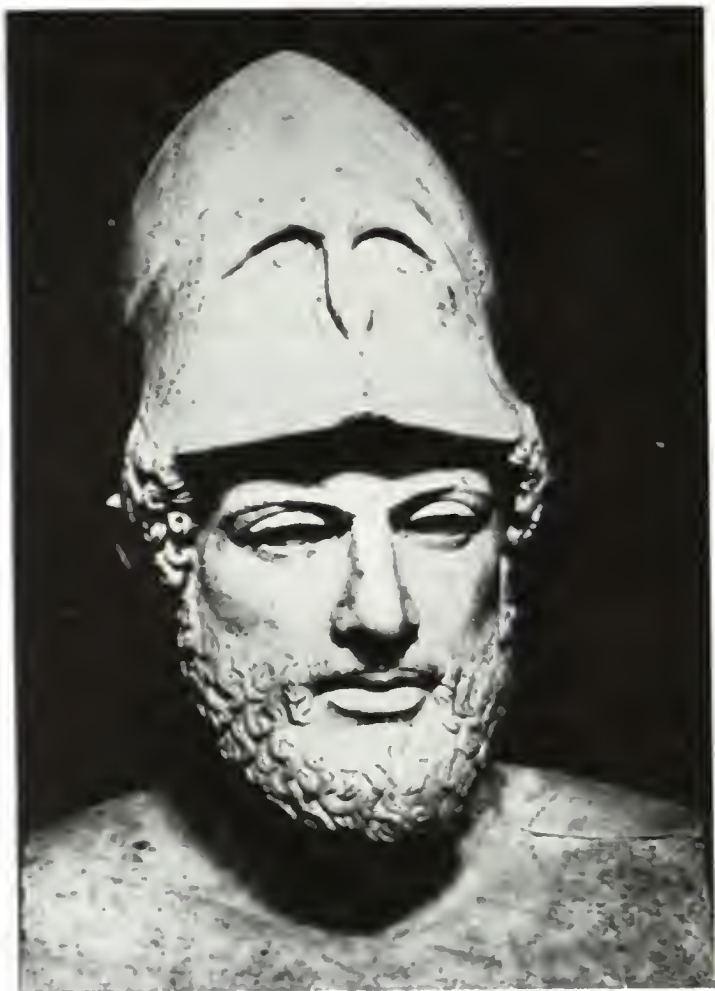
thoroughly discredited the party favoring tyranny that it had no further importance in Athenian history. The fall of Themistocles therefore allowed the aristocrats to return to power, and for almost twenty years they dominated Athens. They were now willing to accept the democratic reforms of Cleisthenes, for they had learned how to manipulate the new machinery. Their leader was Cimon (c. 507–449), the son of Miltiades. The Persian wars had impressed upon him the desirability of coöperation among the various Greek states and he spent his life promoting Panhellenism. He spoke of Sparta as the “yoke-fellow” of Athens, and declared that an injury to either city would cause all Greece to go lame. As it was by no means obvious in 479 that the Persians would not presently make a third attack upon Greece, Cimon’s policies won favor for several years. Unfortunately, however, he offended many of his Athenian fellow citizens by giving aid to Sparta, and in 461 he fell from power.

Cimon’s greatest achievement was the organization of the Delian League (477), a union of the Aegean Islands with Athens for mutual defense against Persia. Moreover, the defeat of Persia had encouraged the Ionian cities to revolt, one by one, and usually they were successful. The rebels then joined the Delian League to insure their continued independence. The League was a voluntary union, with each member state contributing to the treasury and the common defense according to its ability. As Athens, the only member of the League on the mainland of Greece, was more powerful than all the other states combined, she easily became its leader, but in the days of Cimon she did not abuse her power.

*The
Delian
League*

For thirty years after the fall of Cimon, Athens was ruled by Pericles, the most famous of Greek statesmen, whose name is still given to the period that was greatest in Athenian political power, in democracy, and in intellectual achievement (461–429). His mother was a niece of Cleisthenes, and his father, a general in the Persian wars, had once sued Miltiades for political misconduct. Pericles continued the family feud by suing Cimon, and he took over leadership soon after the fall of his rival. Pericles’ success was due in part to his intellectual superiority and his democratic idealism, in part to his statesmanship, in part to his oratory, and in part to his skill as a practical politician. The most important of his political innovations was the practice of paying officials regular salaries: such payment was unnecessary when all magistrates were eupatrids or other wealthy men, but Pericles now made it financially possible for a poor man to

*Pericles
(461–429)*



PERICLES. (Vatican Museum)

hold office. Pericles also gave employment to large numbers of citizens and spent money lavishly for social services and poor relief. He thus created a following attached to himself by economic bonds, against which the aristocratic leaders were impotent.

**Democratic
imperialism**

Pericles' foreign policy was the exact opposite of Cimon's. Twenty years had passed since the Greek victory at Salamis, and the Persian menace no longer loomed very large. Pericles therefore decided to forget it and promote friendly commercial relations with the lands still under Persian rule. He also had little sympathy with Cimon's

Panhellenism, dreaming instead of making Athens supreme throughout Greece. And above all, he adopted a new policy toward the Delian League. As fear of Persia gradually evaporated, the islanders began to begrudge their payments and wished to resign from the League. Pericles forbade them to do so and sent troops to punish those who tried. He even increased the payments demanded of the allies and used the money to pay for his social program at Athens. To justify this action he contended that the allies were paying for protection and that, as long as this protection was provided, they had no right to ask how their money was spent. The Delian League was thus transformed into an empire exploited by democratic politicians in Athens.

These various policies aroused such fear and antagonism among the other Greek states that Corinth and Sparta organized a coalition to restrain Athens. The resulting Peloponnesian War lasted for twenty-seven years (431–404). When Pericles died in 429, he was succeeded by other democratic politicians who lacked his idealism and ability. Pericles had based the defense of Athens upon her walls, coupled with the naval supremacy which assured an uninterrupted flow of grain from the Crimea. This defense proved impregnable until the Spartans destroyed the navy. Starvation then forced Athens to surrender.

**Pelopon-
nesian War
(431–404)**

Panhellenism

During the war Sparta and her allies had spoken eloquently of the liberties of Greece, which they professed to defend against Athens, but in the hour of victory they could think of nothing to do but substitute Spartan domination for the Athenian rule which they had denounced. When the Spartans failed in their efforts to dominate, the Thebans undertook the task with no better success. Moreover, during the war the Athenians had made a great point of their democracy and had encouraged democratic revolutions in hostile cities, proclaiming themselves the champions of democracy everywhere. The Spartans and their allies, in retaliation, encouraged counterrevolutions, and championed aristocrats everywhere. These ideological conflicts survived the fall of Athens, and Greece was torn asunder by wars between cities and civil wars between the different social classes in each city. Not until almost the middle of the fourth century did exhaustion bring a momentary lull in these hostilities.

**Spartan
and Theban
hegemony**

**Panhellenism
preached by
Isocrates**

The decline of Greece began with the Peloponnesian War, and the forces let loose in that conflict eventually brought the whole Greek people to ruin. In the fourth century, however, there were many who thought something could still be done to ward off disaster. Various plans were proposed, the most significant of which was a revived Panhellenism. Its leading advocate was an Athenian aristocrat named Isocrates (436–338). He believed that some sort of national union was the only way to save Greek civilization, but he recognized the impossibility of forming a voluntary union, such as Cimon had favored, or a union based on the supremacy of one Greek state, such as Pericles or the Spartans had desired. The only solution that Isocrates could see was to call in an outsider who would defeat and unite all the Greeks, and he called upon Philip II of Macedon to render Greece this service. Philip was glad to oblige.

**Philip of
Macedon**

Macedonia was a rough and backward country, lying just north of Greece, whose shepherds and peasants made excellent soldiers. Though the Macedonians talked a dialect of Greek, other Greeks had been unwilling to recognize them as fellow Hellenes. Philip (382–336) was an ambitious and able man, the best general of his day, a clever and unscrupulous diplomat, and wily enough to use Panhellenic idealism to advance his interests. After careful preparation, he invaded Greece and at Chaeronea he defeated a Greek army hastily scraped together to oppose him (338). He then ordered delegates from all the Greek states to assemble at Corinth, and there he organized a league which bore a superficial resemblance to the one dreamed of by the idealistic Isocrates. Sparta alone remained outside the League of Corinth, and Philip saw fit to ignore her absence. Philip then prepared a war against Persia under the pretext of liberating the Ionian cities reconquered by the Persians since the fall of Athens and her League. Before he could launch his great campaign, however, he was murdered by one of his nobles (336). He was succeeded by his brilliant son Alexander III, later known as Alexander the Great (356–323).

ALEXANDER THE GREAT

**Alexander's
inheritance**

Alexander was born in the summer of 356 and therefore was not quite twenty years old when his father died. From Philip he inherited a well-organized kingdom, an excellent army, a corps of well-trained and loyal generals, and—in a more immaterial way—strategic insight



ALEXANDER. (Louvre)

and remarkable talents as an organizer and leader. From his mother Olympias—the daughter of an Epirote (Albanian) chieftain—he inherited not only the good looks which always stood him in good stead but also a contagious enthusiasm, a romantic nature which drove him onward to the ends of the earth, and a tendency to religious mysticism which made him believe that he had a divine mission, that he was a favorite of the gods, or perhaps that he was a god himself. Alexander was a dreamer but also a hard worker, a mystical enthusiast and idealist but also a practical man, a leader fit to create a new world.

**His
conquests**

After a few months spent crushing a Greek rebellion, Alexander launched the invasion of Asia that his father had prepared. In May, 334, he landed not far from the site of ancient Troy, where he soon defeated a Persian army (Granicus). In the course of the summer he occupied the entire Ionian coast. Had Philip lived to accomplish this much, he would doubtless have announced that, by thus uniting all the Greeks, he had completed his lifework. Alexander, however, being at the age of twenty-two, was not yet ready to retire. He crossed Asia Minor, defeated a Persian army led by the king himself, and, advancing southward, entered Egypt unopposed and was crowned king of Egypt at Memphis (332). Returning to Asia, he defeated the Persians in a third great battle (Gaugamela), after which he entered and destroyed the Persian capital at Persepolis (331). Alexander claimed the whole Persian Empire as his by right of conquest, but making good this claim required five years of difficult campaigning. He advanced eastward even into India, but in 326 he was forced by a mutiny to return to Babylon. The year 324 he spent reorganizing his empire, and then he died suddenly (June 13, 323). He was not quite thirty-three years old.

**Lucky in
his death**

Alexander was lucky in his death. In eleven years of brilliant warfare he had conquered and overrun the whole enormous Persian Empire and he had reached the limits of the known world to the east, the north, and the south. Only the West remained. Had his life been spared a little longer, he might have conquered this too. But what would he have done after that? He might well have been reduced to weeping, as the old legend has it, because he had no more worlds to conquer. It would have been necessary for him to govern his vast domain, but no evidence suggests that he had the qualities required of a routine administrator. He would probably have failed in this second and more important task, and his failure would have robbed him of all glory. As it was, he died at the peak of the wave, and he left behind him a reputation equaled by few in history. Many men have been called "the Great" by their admirers, but Alexander stands preëminent among them. He is always Alexander the Great.

**Division
of the
empire**

Alexander died suddenly and unexpectedly before any arrangements had been made for a successor. His generals therefore fell to fighting amongst themselves, and only in 301 was a settlement reached by which the empire was divided between four generals. One was soon eliminated, and after 250 three dynasties ruled what remained of Alexander's empire. The descendants of Antigonus (called the



Antigonids) ruled Macedonia and often dominated Greece, though the Greek states remained nominally "free"; the descendants of Seleucus (the Seleucids) held Asia Minor, Syria, and points east; and the Ptolemies ruled Egypt, Cyrene, Palestine, and several islands. In addition to the Greek cities a few odds and ends were nominally free, but it may be said loosely that these three dynasties ruled the Greek states of Europe, Asia, and Africa respectively. Each dynasty continued to dream of acquiring Alexander's whole empire, but no one could eliminate the other two, and wars between them became chronic.

**The
Hellenistic
world**

Alexander and his successors thought of the Greeks as a master race, destined to rule over others, and in the third century great efforts were made to strengthen the Greek population in the East. Countless Greek cities were founded or refounded, of which the most famous was Alexandria in Egypt. Thousands of Greeks migrated to these new cities, thereby robbing Greece of energetic young men and accelerating her decline. In spite of the wars, a high level of economic prosperity prevailed in the Greek Orient throughout the third century—a century which was glorified by some of the greatest cultural achievements of the Greek genius. After 200 B.C., however, the Greek empires went into rapid decline, largely because of a revival of the oriental peoples whom Alexander had conquered. In a panic, the three Greek dynasties tried to cooperate against this oriental menace, but it was then too late. At just this time, too, the Romans entered upon the world scene, and eventually they created a world empire of their own. The Antigonids of Macedonia were eliminated in 167 B.C., but the other two dynasties, though reduced almost to impotence by the repeated rebellions of their oriental subjects, were able to continue governing—after a fashion—for a century longer. The last remnants of the Seleucid Empire in Syria were swept up by Rome in 63, and Egypt was annexed in 30 B.C. This period, from Alexander to the victory of the Romans, is called the "Hellenistic" period in Greek history, to distinguish it from the "Hellenic" period which extended from the end of the Dorian dark ages to Alexander.

9. GREEK CULTURE

THE political and economic history of the Greeks—or of any other people—tells us much concerning their character, their way of life, their relations with each other and with their neighbors, and their views on such matters as democracy, imperialism, and racial snobbishness, but it does not tell the whole story, nor does it record the more important creations of the Greek genius. In general, the Greeks were not at their best in political life, and, except for the ideal of world conquest after the manner of Alexander, later peoples inherited few political ideas from them. Greece's contribution to the civilization of Europe lay rather in such fields as literature and art, science and philosophy, and those various things that are taught today as the backbone of a liberal education. The Greeks too learned these things as part of their general education, though not necessarily in schools. Where, then, and from whom did they receive their education? Much of it they received from religion.

**Religion
and culture**

GREEK RELIGION

Modern writers give a very superficial view of the religious life of Greece when they picture it as limited to offering sacrifices to, and making up poetic myths about, the gods who dwelt on Mount Olympus. Greek religion was more complicated than that. Then as today, persons with different intellectual and social backgrounds held widely different views about religious matters, and in Greece, as elsewhere, the religious spirit manifested itself in countless ways. Some men were intensely religious, others only lukewarm, others almost indifferent; some were grossly superstitious, others were enlightened, others skeptical; some were austere ascetics, others wild enthusiasts; some

**Varieties
of Greek
religion**

tortured themselves with thoughts of sin, suffering, and expiation, others feared eternal punishment or looked forward to a happy immortality, and still others wanted only a reasonable guide to conduct here on earth; some preserved the traditional formalism of priests, others were mystics believing that they communed directly with God, others were inspired prophets. In fact, there are few varieties of religious experience that cannot be observed in ancient Greece. Unfortunately our brief survey can touch upon only a few of the more prominent features of this varied religious life.

**Spirits of
field and
forest**

The first evidences of religion that a visitor to ancient Greece would have seen were countless shrines and altars dotting the landscape. They were dedicated to spirits of the field and forests—fauns, satyrs, pans—that were worshiped by the farmers and shepherds of the community. Such spirits had only local authority. Most of them were friendly and could help mortals who called upon them, enjoined them, or offered them sacrifices, but others would haunt a man who had broken the moral law. These spirits dated back to neolithic times, or perhaps even farther. The day-by-day religion of the rural population in classic times centered largely around them, their shrines, and their ceremonies; and old tales about them gave the peasant his mental picture of the world and the moral forces at work in it. Other altars were dedicated to heroes of old, such as Hercules, men whose mighty deeds had proved that they were more than mere men and who were therefore honored at certain times and seasons.

**The gods on
Olympus**

Above these minor deities were the great gods who supposedly dwelt in bliss on Mount Olympus, who received more formal worship, to whom costly temples were erected on the acropolises, and whose authority spread over all Greece. Some of these Olympians, such as Zeus, were of Achaean and northern origin, others came from the Minoan peoples, but all had been greatly transformed in Mycenaean times. Most of the major Greek deities, as well as their shrines, their forms of worship, and their mythology, can be traced back to these early times. In fact, the mythology of the Olympians reflects social and political conditions that existed in Mycenaean times but never again in Greek history.

**The
"mystery
cults"**

This was the pleasant and popular side of Greek religion, but there was another, more somber side, often associated with what the Greeks called "mysteries." The mysteries were religious rites and ceremonies whose performance purified men from their sins and assured them a blessed immortality in the hereafter. The mythology of these cults

usually centered around Mother Earth, and taught that the seed of grain which dies, is buried, and rises again illustrates the immortality of the human soul. From very early times such mysteries were celebrated at Eleusis, a village near Athens, in honor of Demeter (Mother Earth) and her daughter Persephone. This cult was presumably of Minoan and ultimately of oriental origin, but we have seen that similar cults had existed throughout the Near East ever since neolithic times.

The profound social changes of the eighth and seventh centuries, when trade and industry were starting up and the city-states were first beginning, brought significant changes to the Greek religion. The thousands of peasants who left their village homes to seek new lives in the cities were thereby torn away from the old shrines, with their friendly spirits and their happy rustic festivals, and for them the old religion no longer had the same meaning as before. Each city believed itself to be under the special care of one of the Olympian gods, and the cult of these gods usually took on the character of a patriotic festival rather than worship. Such was the case, for example, with the great Panathenaea at Athens, founded by Peisistratus. New times therefore demanded new outlets for religious emotions.

A revolution in religion

The worship of Dionysus filled this need for some people. Though of ancient origin, this cult developed greatly in the eighth century. It often assumed wild and exuberant forms, with women called maenads dancing and shrieking on the hills at night, somewhat as in the old-fashioned American camp meetings and revivals. Working themselves up into a frenzy, these maenads believed that they were possessed by the god. Presently these extreme manifestations were toned down, after which the cult of Dionysus spread widely in Greece. Out of it grew the form of religion known as Orphism, allegedly founded by a poet and musician named Orpheus. The Orphics speculated much upon the nature of man, his divine soul, and its fate after death. They showed their contempt for the body by fasting and other forms of asceticism, but they preached high ideals of justice, personal holiness, and individual responsibility. They were the earliest theologians in Greece, and they exercised a deep influence upon Plato and other moralists of later times.

Dionysus and Orphism

At about the same time other Greeks were turning to the worship of Apollo. Whereas Dionysus and the Orphics appealed especially to members of the humbler classes, Apollo was a favorite of the aristocracy. Poets and sculptors pictured him as good-looking, skilled in

Apollo

sports and music, an ardent lover, generous, sociable, and high-minded—together a very likable sort of young fellow, “the god of perpetual youth.” The Greeks always stressed his purity; he was supposed to have jurisdiction over the rites of purification; and he was an expert on matters of law and justice. His purity gave him the divine art of healing, and he enjoyed the gift of prophecy. Of his many oracles, the most celebrated was at Delphi in central Greece. Here persons from every part of Greece asked the god (or his priestess) questions of many sorts, and the answers sometimes were matters of importance in Greek history. In general, the oracle favored the aristocrats against the tyrants, it was Panhellenic, and it held up high moral standards before its worshipers.

**Religious
skepticism**

In fifth-century Athens these religious practices and theological views were subjected to severe criticism. The educated classes could no longer accept the old myths of the Olympian gods, many of which seemed either silly or immoral. A new attitude toward the world was arising, with philosophers expounding a more scientific view of nature. When the old religion no longer inspired men's hearts, it was allowed to die. At first this skeptical spirit showed itself only in the educated upper classes, but in the chaotic fourth century, when everything was going to rack and ruin, it spread to persons of every sort. After Alexander, new religions began to seep in from the Orient, and there was a general syncretism or mingling of religions. The old gods being dead, the new were struggling to be born.

GREEK LITERATURE

**Books and
literature**

While all Greeks owed much of their view of the world to one form or another of religion, many were also indebted to their literature. In those days men knew literature from hearing it rather than from reading it in books. Greeks had begun to write their language in the eighth century, using the alphabet based on the Phoenician, but the knowledge of letters was then so rare, and writing materials were so expensive, that they could be used only for the most essential business and legal documents. The only paper known to the Greeks was “papyrus,” which had to be imported from Egypt and therefore was very expensive. Throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages, until the invention of printing about A.D. 1450, books were a luxury for rich men or for libraries, not for ordinary people. Bards recited epic poetry,

lyric poetry was sung, and sometimes prose works were publicly read aloud.

Greek literature began with the Homeric poems, but while all Greeks knew something of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, no one knew exactly who Homer was, or when or where he lived. Controversy regarding this "Homeric question" was renewed in the nineteenth century, when extreme views were put forward to explain the origin of the poems. The problem is not solved even yet, and probably it never will be, but recent scholars have pictured the rise of the epics somewhat as follows. In Mycenaean times there had been companies of bards who entertained the nobility with ballads about raiding expeditions and other martial adventures of the Achaeans. These poems were preserved only in the memories of the bards, who passed them on from generation to generation, each bard altering them as he saw fit. The Dorian invasions drove many of the bards to Ionia, where they gradually came to center their stories around the Trojan War. Perhaps they did so because this had been the last and greatest of the Achaean raids, or perhaps it was because Troy was near Ionia and the Ionian Greeks liked to hear about how their ancestors had defeated Asiatics. Then, sometime between 800 and 700, there arose in Ionia a poet of genius whom we may call "Homer." He wove the battle stories together to form the *Iliad*. Various adventure stories were similarly collected in the *Odyssey*. Whether this was done by the same "Homer" or another we cannot say. Further alterations doubtless occurred, but today the poems stand substantially as this "Homer" left them.

Homer

The *Iliad* tells of the Trojan War, but the story is limited to the events of a few weeks in the last year of that war, and it stops before the fall of the city: it is the story of the quarrel of two Greek leaders (Achilles and Agamemnon) and its dire consequences for the Greeks. The *Odyssey* is the story of the return home of one leader (Odysseus), who wandered about the Mediterranean for ten years: here again the action of the poem is limited to a few weeks, though Odysseus is made to recite a long account of the fall of Troy and his earlier wanderings. Though the poems nominally deal with these rather limited themes, the poet permits himself wide digressions and expresses himself on almost everything in heaven or earth. The story is exciting, the poetry sublime, and everywhere Homer shows his deep insight into the hearts of men.

**The Iliad
and the
Odyssey**

**The
school-
master
of Greece**

In historic times the Homeric poems were the foundation of all literary education in Greece, and they were regarded as the last word in wisdom of every sort. Plato once declared Homer to be "the schoolmaster of Greece," and we may add that never in all history has a whole people enjoyed a comparable schoolmaster. Nor did Homer's influence and importance end with the ancient Greeks. The epic poets of Rome were deeply indebted to him, and they passed on the heritage to modern times. Homer's influence also reached out to every other branch of literature and to many other fields of thought as well. Homer may be called the father of European literature.

The Greek Theater

**The birth
of tragedy**

The drama too was a form of literature that touched the thinking of many Greeks. In its origin the Greek theater was closely associated with the worship of Dionysus, and it never completely severed its connection with that god. As the wild Dionysiac orgies of early times were tamed, the worshipers began acting out the myth of the god as a pageant. Trained companies of dancers, called choruses, then began acting to the accompaniment of music. Later these choruses acted out other myths as well, while an interlocutor was added who recited a poem to explain what was going on. The next step came when a second interlocutor was added, making dialogue possible, and still later three actors were used. The chorus lost some of its importance when the attention of the audience was centered on the actors, but it was always there, performing its dances and singing, and it had an important part in the play. The tragedies continued to deal with subjects drawn from mythology, but the dramatist was allowed great freedom in his treatment of the story, and he never lacked myths that could be made vehicles for expressing his views on almost any subject.

**Greek
theaters**

When the drama became popular, outdoor theaters were built in many cities. The seats might be cut into the sides of a hill, or they might be tiers of wooden benches, but they centered around a circular dancing floor for the chorus. This dancing floor was called the orchestra (from *orchesis*, "dance"), and at its center stood an altar to Dionysus. Behind this dancing floor was a building called the *skene*, which served as background ("scenery") for the actors, and from which they made their entrances and exits. The plays were performed at the great spring festival of Dionysus. Prizes were awarded for the best tragedies, and rich men assumed the expense of costuming and



GREEK THEATER. This theater, at Epidaurus in Argolis, was built toward the middle of the fourth century before Christ, and is one of the most typical and best preserved in Greece. The stone seats, cut into the side of a hill, provided places for about 15,000 spectators. The circular dancing floor, or *orchestra*, served as a stage for both actors and chorus. At its center stood an altar to Dionysus, called the *thymele*. Behind the *orchestra* may be seen the foundations of the house called the *skene*. In front of this building stood a row of columns, behind which was an arcade. Actors made their entrances and exits from the *skene*, which contained dressing rooms and rooms for the storage of properties. The *skene* served as background for the action of the play, which usually was thought of as occurring before a temple or other public building, but sometimes painted "scenery" was added to give a local touch. In Roman times the floor of the front part of the *skene* was elevated to form a stage, and the *orchestra* was given over to spectators, as in a modern theater. (Galloway)

training the choruses. Hundreds of tragedies were written and performed, the work of many dramatists, but today we have only a few plays from each of the three most famous authors.

Aeschylus (525-456) was born to a eupatrid family of Eleusis and fought at Marathon and Salamis. He is said to have composed ninety tragedies, of which only seven now remain, but as these seven come from different periods in the poet's career, we can trace the steps in his development. The two earliest tragedies are characterized by

Aeschylus

extreme simplicity of plot, more than half the lines are sung by the chorus, and the speeches are little more than declamation: in the plays of his middle and late periods these defects are remedied. The two earliest plays deal with political subjects (*The Persians* contains a long description of the battle of Salamis, valuable as coming from an actual participant in that battle), but the later ones deal especially with religion. Aeschylus expressed a low opinion of the Olympian gods, picturing Zeus as a tyrant, but he was much concerned with the problems raised by the mysteries—as was fitting for a native of Eleusis. In a series of three plays dealing with Orestes he traced the fearful consequences of a crime committed by Agamemnon: the hero is murdered by his wife; this crime must be avenged by their son Orestes, who kills his mother; but at last the insane Orestes is purified and freed from the pursuing Furies. In religion as in politics, Aeschylus remained a "Marathon fighter" all his life, a conservative gentleman of the sort that kept Cimon in power for so many years.

Sophocles

Sophocles (496–406) was a generation younger. He was not so bold and vigorous a thinker as Aeschylus, and though a friend of Pericles he disapproved of much that the new day brought. The seven of his plays which remain (out of 123) all date from his later years. The *Antigone* deals with the conflict between old religious duties and the law of the new all-powerful city-state, with the heroine preferring the former at the cost of her life. Unlike Aeschylus again, Sophocles defended the old Olympian gods, though he does so in a calm and enlightened manner, making countless concessions to their critics. Five of the seven extant plays center around the fulfillment of oracles in unexpected ways: Sophocles believed in oracles though his characters did not—to their ultimate sorrow. Sophocles' gods are not the willful tyrants pictured by Aeschylus but a benign and kindly Fate ruling the world: arbitrary power has given way to law in heaven.

Euripides

Euripides (484–406) was a Periclean democrat. As such, he was unpopular with the upper classes at Athens, and his tragedies won first prize only four times, as opposed to thirteen firsts for Aeschylus and eighteen for Sophocles. Later generations found him the most interesting of the three, however, and eighteen of his ninety-two plays have been preserved. Euripides took a special delight in attacking popular prejudices and popular heroes. More often than not in his plays, the Homeric heroes appear as brutal murderers while the only admirable persons to appear are the villagers of the chorus, who

watch the bloody deeds of their betters with consternation and horror. Aeschylus considered it the religious duty of Orestes to murder his mother; Sophocles believed that it was decreed by Fate; but Euripides pictured it as just one more horrible crime. The gods themselves fare no better, and Apollo appears as a liar, a seducer, a poltroon, an odious hypocrite, and even a cattle rustler. Yet the *Bacchae* deals sympathetically with the Dionysus of the mysteries, who was both god and man, and who symbolized what we today call "the divinity of man." Being a good Periclean, Euripides favored the Peloponnesian War at first, but after the death of Pericles the poet's attitude changed. In the end he came to regard the war as a suicidal struggle in which all Greece was hurling herself to destruction, and he could see no solution to her problems except Panhellenic reconciliation and solidarity.

Greek comedy too sprang from the worship of Dionysus. During the festivals, bands of masked revelers would parade the streets in carnival mood, playing pranks and making jokes at the expense of prominent persons. From these impromptu performances the formal comedy developed, but it always retained much of the old Dionysiac spirit.

**Greek
comedy**

Aristophanes (450-380) was the greatest of the Greek comedians, or as his admirers simply say, the greatest of comedians. Born to a well-to-do aristocratic family, Aristophanes devoted his talents to scourging the democrats. He was particularly venomous against the successors of Pericles, whom he ridiculed unmercifully. He also disapproved of the Peloponnesian War, which he attacked in several comedies, tracing its origin to ludicrous causes and attributing its continuance to demagogues and profiteers. It is surprising that such plays could be presented publicly at Athens in wartime.

**Aristoph-
anes**

We know the names of several other writers of comedy who lived in the fifth century, but their works are lost, and not until the generation after Alexander did another important comedian appear. This was Menander (340-291). His plays seem trivial when compared to those of Aristophanes, for he had none of his predecessor's zeal for persuading and reforming men. His mild comedies of manners show everyday life in the years immediately after Alexander. The bullying father, the intriguing and impertinent slave, the lovesick youth, the amiable courtesan, the swaggering soldier back from the wars, all achieve happiness after various amusing adventures. Old standards of conduct are laughed at, parents are hopelessly out of date, youth

Menander

has the world before it. None of Menander's comedies has been preserved entire, but we have long fragments of several and free Latin translations of others. From the latter even Molière and Shakespeare (*Comedy of Errors*) deigned to learn about comedy.

The Greek Historians

The birth of history

Historical writing was a third type of literature in which the Greeks excelled. Since they regarded Homer as sober history, aristocratic families liked to believe themselves descended from Homeric heroes, and city-states traced their history back to Homeric times. The first Greek historians arose in Ionia and wrote small books supplying doubtful information to persons or cities seeking such lineage. The Persian wars brought a new impulse to historical writing, for many Greeks now wanted to know more about the people whom they had defeated, and books were written that told about Persia, Lydia, and other foreign countries. Then arose the two great historians, Herodotus and Thucydides.

Herodotus

Herodotus (c. 484–c. 425) was born at Halicarnassus, a Dorian city in Asia Minor, but as a young man he was exiled for his part in an unsuccessful rebellion against the Persians. Various trading expeditions took him to the Black Sea, to Babylon, and to Egypt, and at last, about 447, he reached Athens. Here he remained four years. He became a personal friend and admirer of Pericles, he knew Sophocles and other intellectual leaders of the day, and he fell in love with the city, where he found the liberty he had dreamed of as a youth. In 443 he migrated to an Athenian colony in Italy, probably as Pericles' special agent. There he spent the rest of his life, and there he wrote his *History*. Though nominally a history of the Persian wars, more than half the book is devoted to background material about Persia, Egypt, and the Ionian revolt. Herodotus wrote from an Athenian, or even a Periclean, point of view, and while he was proud of the Greek victories (which he made to appear largely as Athenian victories) he was not bitter against the Persians. He recognized their many good qualities, and he regretted that there had been a war. Herodotus was a magnificent storyteller and his book is full of anecdotes of greater or less plausibility. Yet he was by no means gullible, and sometimes he remarks that he does not believe the stories himself. Along with these anecdotes there is much sober information, and recent archeological discoveries have raised his reputation for accuracy. Herodotus's his-

tory is one of the most interesting books of the ancient world, and even today it appeals alike to children, to philosophers, and to historians.

Thucydides (c. 460–c. 395) was a very different man and wrote a very different history. Descended from Miltiades, the victor at Marathon, he was a great-nephew of Cimon. During the Peloponnesian War he became a general (425) but was exiled when he failed in his first mission. He passed the remaining twenty years of the war on a family estate in Thrace, watching and brooding over the decline and fall of his city. He tells us that at the very outset of the war he decided to write its history and began taking notes. Most of his book, as we now have it, however, was written after the war, and death interrupted him when his narrative had reached the summer of 411.

Thucydides attempted to write a scientific history. Because he believed that what had happened once would happen again in the same circumstances, he intended his book to serve as a warning and guide to future statesmen. He therefore devoted great care to collecting accurate information, and he showed his depth of mind in his interpretations of events. He attributed everything to natural causes, never invoking the gods. He was particularly good at showing the social consequences of events, as of the plague at Athens in 430 or of a revolution at Corcyra a few years later. His chief desire was to show why Athens fell. He recognized the high personal merit of Pericles but (as was understandable in a relative of Cimon) he disapproved of Periclean policies. He believed that the fall of Athens was caused by her imperialism. In masterly manner he shows how this imperialism caused other Greeks to fear Athens and her subjects to hate her; as she could not do without her empire, Athens became cruel in her efforts to keep it; and as the war continued she became more and more frantic. In the end, the loss of the empire brought the fall of the city, but long before that culminating tragedy, imperialism had robbed Athens of all that had once made her great.

Political conditions in the next century gave a new turn to historical writing and brought a decline in its standards. Disciples of Isocrates wrote histories of Greece rather than of separate cities, treating the country as a unit, and by their impassioned rhetoric they sought to promote Panhellenism. Though only small fragments of these histories are available today, it is clear that as history they fell far behind the masterpieces of Herodotus and Thucydides. The exploits of Alexander gave historians much to write about. His romantic story was told over

Thucydides

**His
History**

**Decline in
historical
writing**

and over again, each successive writer exaggerating the exaggerations of his predecessors, until an Alexander legend arose that had little in common with historic fact. This legend continued to inspire ambitious generals throughout antiquity, and even Napoleon was not insensible to its charms. Other writers told the Greeks about the earlier history of the countries Alexander had conquered, and a few even attempted to write world histories. This last was too great a task, however, and not until Roman times did such writers achieve a moderate success.

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

The birth of philosophy

Even before the Persian wars a few intellectual leaders in Greece had begun to question the supernatural view of the world taught by religion and Homer. In fact, it seems doubtful whether Homer himself really adored the gods of whom he told so many scandalous stories. At any rate, a group of men arose in Ionia during the sixth century who cast aside the old theologies and took the first steps toward formulating scientific and rational philosophies of the world. These men are sometimes called the "pre-Socratic" philosophers. We are not well informed as to their theories, and no attempt need be made to summarize them here. It is enough to say that the pre-Socratics endeavored to explain the world in rational terms, invoking no supernatural powers.

Natural science

It is quite wrong to call these men scientists, for their purposes and methods were far removed from those of the modern scientist. They were philosophers, speculating about the world and nature. At the same time, however, other Greeks were simply collecting information about nature and might therefore be called scientists. Preëminent among them stood the physicians. They made great progress over their oriental colleagues, eliminating magic and relying entirely upon observation and experiment to effect cures. The most famous of Greek physicians was Hippocrates of Cos, at the end of the fifth century, who wrote a number of scientific treatises on medicine. The "Hippocratic oath," which he administered to his pupils, is taken by doctors today when they receive their degrees, for it still embodies the highest ideals of the medical profession. The writings of Aristotle show that other men too had made great progress in natural science, but not even their names have been preserved.

In fifth-century Athens there arose a group of men who made a profession of teaching the philosophic doctrines to the youth of the upper classes. These teachers were called "sophists." Ever since the days of Solon there had been elementary schools attended for a few years by nearly all the boys of Athens. Here reading, arithmetic, and other primary subjects were taught. Boys of the upper classes later progressed to other schools where they studied the various subjects—including music and gymnastics—with which all Greek gentlemen were supposed to be familiar. After this course had been completed, some of the young men attended the lectures of one or more sophists. The sophists had no organized university or school, for each man lectured when he wished on any subject that interested him. Conservative persons were often dismayed at the things these men said, and in the end the sophists gained the reputation of being superficial and mercenary. No doubt some deserved the criticism, but not all of them. They numbered Pericles among their friends, and they imparted to their pupils the ideas of Sophocles and Herodotus, of Euripides and Thucydides, and of the philosophers and natural scientists. They discussed with their pupils the problems of law and ethics, of government and religion, treating them in the light of the new knowledge. These sophists educated the intellectual aristocracy of Athens, and their pupils made Athens the first truly enlightened city in the history of the world.

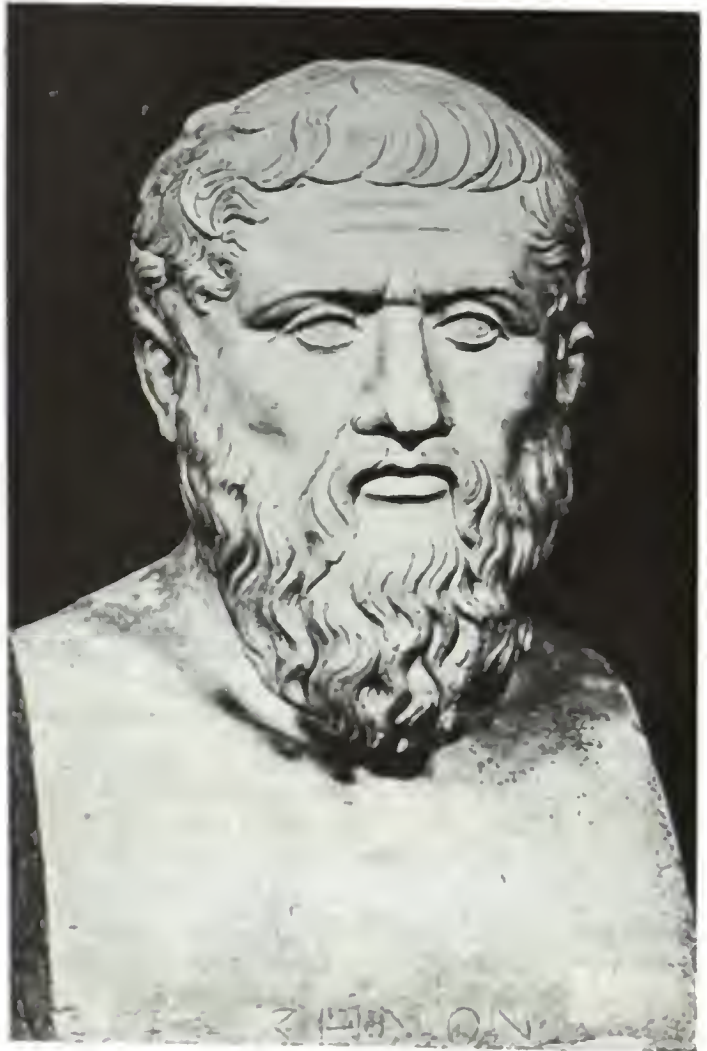
*The
sophists*

The most famous of the sophists was Socrates (469–399). Not much is known of this strange man's life, but he became famous in his death. It was his greatest joy in life to converse with young men of the upper classes about problems of social and philosophical significance, leading them by skillful questioning to conclusions very different from the cocksure and conventional views they had expressed at first. The unorthodoxy of his opinions annoyed—and sometimes enraged—the fathers of his youthful companions, but he won the eternal friendship of the young men themselves. He was one of the greatest teachers in history. The young men who once fell into his clutches were marked for life, and practically every Athenian of intellectual attainments in the next generation claimed—rightly in most cases—that he had once been associated with Socrates. But when the democratic politicians of Athens needed a scapegoat after their defeat in 404, they accused him of having corrupted the youth of the city and forced him to drink the hemlock (399).

Socrates

*Plato and Aristotle***Plato**

Socrates' most famous pupil was Plato (427-347). Born to an aristocratic Athenian family, the young Plato had dreamed of becoming a statesman, but such a career was impossible for him in democratic Athens, and the condemnation of Socrates disgusted him with politicians. The young man had also dreamed of a literary career,

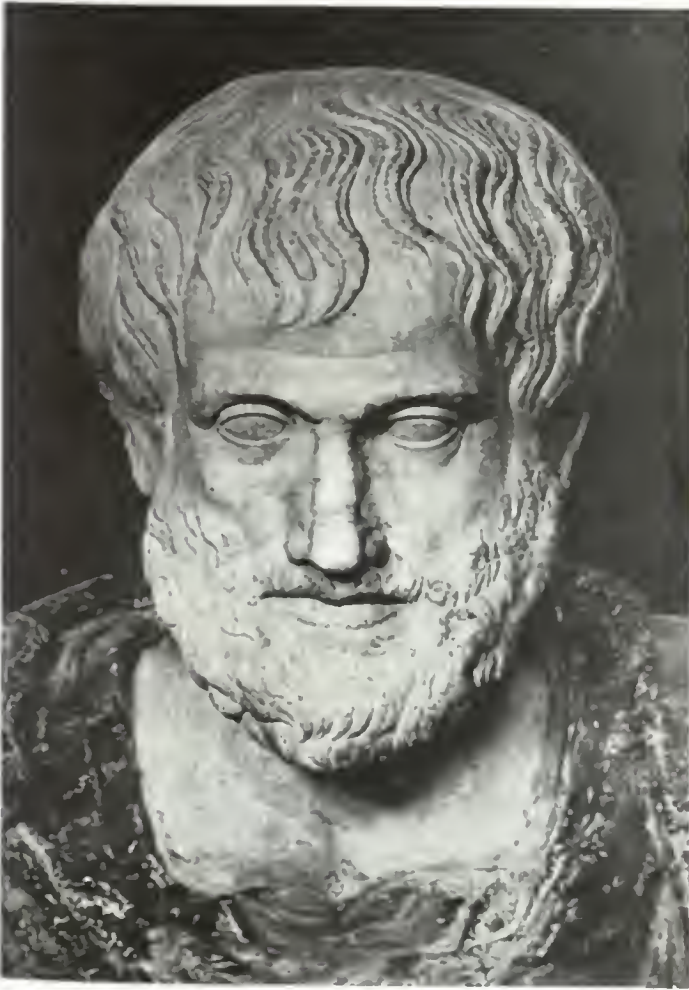


PLATO

for which he certainly was fitted by his talents. After the execution of Socrates, Plato traveled in Egypt, Italy, and Sicily, and not until 387 did he return to Athens. He then opened a school in a building just outside the city, near a grove dedicated to the hero Academus. This school was the famous "Academy." Here Plato lectured to his pupils, here he composed his philosophical writings, and here he died in 347, aged eighty years.

If we wish to understand Plato we must never forget that he was a patriotic Athenian aristocrat who had grown up during the Peloponnesian War, that he had lived through the defeat of 404, and that

**His
Republic**



ARISTOTLE. (Thermae Museum, Rome)

Athens' democratic politicians had executed his beloved Socrates. Plato may have renounced the dream of becoming an active statesman, but all his life he thought about social and political questions, constantly asking himself why Athens had fallen and what she must do to regain her former glory. In general he attributed his city's misfortunes to her politicians, to the sophists (but *not* Socrates, whom he set off from all the rest), and to the wealth and luxury of her citizens. To redeem their city, the Athenians should return to their ancestral virtues and their ancestral religion—to the religion of the mysteries, that is to say, not to the absurdities of the Olympian gods. These views he set forth beautifully in his early Socratic dialogues—so called because in them Socrates is the chief speaker. Here Plato shows us Socrates analyzing such concepts as courage, temperance, and piety; and in the most famous of the dialogues, the *Republic*, he begins with analyzing justice and continues with a long description of an ideal state. This imaginary state has been called a "school-master's Utopia," because in it everyone would be trained from birth for his part in life. In his later years Plato wrote about the nature of ideas and the world. His ideas of this last period have fascinated philosophers, but only trained metaphysicians can comprehend them.

Aristotle

Aristotle (384–322) was Plato's most famous pupil. Born in northern Greece, he was the son of a doctor who became court physician to Philip II of Macedon. At the age of seventeen, Aristotle entered the Academy, and there he remained as a student until Plato's death twenty years later. For three years he was tutor to the young man who became Alexander the Great, and throughout his life the pupil continued to admire his master. When Alexander went to Asia, Aristotle opened a school at the Lyceum in Athens. Here he collected a large library (the first scholar's library in history) in which he and his students carried on extensive researches. Being under the protection of Alexander, Aristotle was not disturbed as long as his protector was alive, but after Alexander's death he was promptly accused of atheism. He hurriedly left Athens, saying that he would not permit the city to sin twice against philosophy. A year later he died.

His

scientific interests

Aristotle differed profoundly from his master Plato. Not being a native Athenian, he had none of Plato's emotional enthusiasm for the city. At the age when Plato was studying geometry and dialectics or listening to Socrates, Aristotle was learning from his physician father how to observe symptoms and what steps to take to effect a

cure. He had none of Plato's poetic inspiration, and his literary style was matter-of-fact and prosaic. Though he wrote on almost every subject, from physics to literary criticism, and from politics to theology, the majority of Aristotle's books deal with natural science—a subject that Plato had largely ignored. Aristotle and his pupils collected in their books most of the science known to the ancient Greeks, and they performed the task so well that all earlier writings were allowed to disappear. Even when Plato and Aristotle wrote on the same subject, they approached it quite differently. When planning to write a book about government, Plato dreamed up an ideal state, but Aristotle set his pupils to work collecting detailed information about the constitutions of 158 actual states, and upon this material he based his generalizations. In brief, Plato was a philosopher and Aristotle was a scientist. Nevertheless, Aristotle concerned himself with the larger problems of philosophy. He had no sympathy with Plato's doctrine of ideas, and when attempting to explain the universe he generalized upon his observations of physical and biological phenomena.

Hellenistic Thought

Alexander's conquests brought a new period in the history of Greek thought, and in no field was the transformation greater than in natural science. In some branches of science (such as astronomy) the Orientals knew more than the Greeks, and in others (such as medicine) they knew different things. The scientists of the early Hellenistic period were therefore able to expand the frontiers of science by blending the two traditions. Moreover, Alexander's expedition had shown the inadequacy of Greek geography, and in the third century explorers brought back still more new information. And finally, the Hellenistic kings, especially the Ptolemies, liked to pose as patrons of learning. A famous museum and the ancient world's largest library were founded at Alexandria, where scientists and scholars were hired to conduct their researches. The third century before Christ thus became the greatest century of antiquity for scientists and scientific research.

Here we can give the names of only a few of the scientists who illuminated this century. The geographer Eratosthenes collected the new information about the earth and drew new maps, locating places in reference to lines of latitude and longitude. He knew that the earth is a sphere, he located the tropics and the Arctic Circle almost

**Meeting
of East
and West**

**Progress
in natural
science**

correctly, and he even calculated the size of the earth. The amazing thing is that his estimate of its circumference was within one per cent correct. An astronomer named Aristarchus maintained that the sun is the center around which the earth and planets revolve, but he could not convince his contemporaries. The physicist Archimedes discovered the principle of specific gravity, worked out the theory of levers and pulleys, and made numerous practical inventions. The mathematician Euclid wrote a book on geometry which differs in no important respect from those studied by high-school pupils today. Archimedes calculated π (the ratio of the diameter to the circumference of a circle) correctly to the third decimal place, and in other writings he seemed on the verge of discovering calculus. Physicians at Alexandria made great progress in understanding and treating disease. By the end of the third century, however, these Hellenistic scientists had gone about as far as they could go, and thereafter progress was slow until the beginning of modern times.

Epicurus

Finally, the Hellenistic world saw the birth of two new philosophies, Epicureanism and Stoicism. The former never won a large number of followers, but throughout the remainder of antiquity there were small groups of disciples who honored the memory of Epicurus (341–270). He taught a materialistic philosophy, and while he did not explicitly deny the existence of the gods, he said that they took no interest or part in earthly affairs. He made it his mission to free men from fear—fear of the gods, fear of magic, fear of death. He spoke much of pleasure, which he said was the chief end of man, but critics did him a grave injustice when they accused him of teaching “Eat, drink, and be merry.” Epicurus was a most austere man and the only pleasures that interested him were friendship and the higher intellectual pleasures.

The Stoics

Stoicism was a much more popular teaching, and may be called the most characteristic philosophy of the Hellenistic age. Its founder, Zeno (c. 336–264), was born in Cyprus of Phoenician and Greek parents but spent the last half of his life teaching philosophy at Athens. The other great Stoics of the third century likewise came from places that had been conquered by Alexander, and often they represented the new oriental element then entering Greek life. Like the Epicureans, the Stoics admitted that the material world is moved only by natural forces, but they were less radical than their rivals. Though they found a place for the gods, they explained away the childish myths about the Olympians. They were idealistic and hopeful,

and when they spoke of God as "the soul of the world" what they meant was that the world is not inexorably hard and cruel, like a machine, but is a fit place for kindly people to live in. The Stoics thought and wrote much about justice and government, they liked to call themselves "citizens of the world," and it was they who first popularized the famous phrase about "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man."

GREEK ART

Many persons find in Greek art the finest expression of the Greek genius, and it is certain that the Greeks turned European art into the lines along which it has developed ever since. We have already seen something of the artistic skill of the Minoans, but the flowering of Greek art began only in the seventh and sixth centuries before Christ, and it reached its climax in the days of Pericles. The artistic genius of the Greek people was fertilized by influences from the East. In the early part of the Greek Renaissance, artists often imitated Egyptian or Syrian models, but oriental influence never was profound, and by the fifth century the Greeks stood firmly on their own feet in matters of art as in everything else.

The Greeks expressed themselves in almost every field of art, but unfortunately we know little of what they accomplished in several of these fields. They were always proud of their achievements in music, for example, but they left no records, and not until late Hellenistic times did they even invent marks to assist musicians in remembering melodies. We know, however, that singers and players were highly honored and sometimes enjoyed great financial success. They played on seven-stringed lyres or on a wood-wind instrument called the *aulos*, which somewhat resembled a double oboe, but which is sometimes incorrectly called a flute. As they never played the two instruments together, they had nothing resembling a modern orchestra. Likewise we know little about Greek dancing, even the formal sort that developed into tragedy. The works of the painters, too, have disappeared. Our opinion of early Greek art must therefore be based on surviving examples of the work of architects, sculptors, vase painters, and jewelers.

As the Greeks had very little conception of town planning, the Athenians let slip a golden opportunity when rebuilding the city after the Persian invasion of 480, yet Periclean Athens was unquestionably

**The Greek
genius
in art**

Greek music

**Contrasts
in a Greek
city**



VENUS DE MILO. (Louvre)



SHEPHERDESS. These two statues show Hellenistic efforts at beauty and at realism.

the showpiece of the Greek world. The great majority of the Athenians lived in small houses, built of sun-dried brick and covered perhaps with stucco, whose two or three small rooms would be considered plain today. Even rich men lived in rather unpretentious houses whose builders paid less attention to the exterior than to the interior. As is still the custom in Mediterranean lands, the property might present to the passer-by nothing but a blank wall and a door, while within there might be a beautiful court, surrounded by a pillared arcade, with the living rooms behind. The residences of the rich were surrounded by the hovels of the poor; streets were narrow and crooked, dirty and ill-smelling; and sanitary conditions were appalling.



BOY WITH THORN. (*Uffizi, Florence*)

The most famous buildings of Athens stood on the Acropolis. Beneath the cliffs on the southern side of this hill ran a road leading past the theater and temple of Dionysus to the agora of Peisistratus, at its western end. The road then turned and ascended the western slope of the hill. Beside this road, almost at the top, stood a temple to Athena, known as the "Wingless Victory." This tiny building, erected about 450, is still cherished as a fine example of Ionic architecture. The Acropolis area—the flat top of the hill—was entered through the "Propylaea," or Entrance Gates. A broad flight of steps led up to the main gates, and on the side opposite the temple to the Wingless Victory was a building used as a picture gallery. On the top of the hill were the two famous temples, the Erechtheum to the northeast and the Parthenon to the south. The latter has been ac-

*The
Athenian
Acropolis*



PARODY. The statue of a boy with a thorn, dating from the early third century, was very popular in the Hellenistic world and at Rome. The parody illustrates another aspect of the Greek genius.

counted the supreme architectural achievement of Greece. Simple and harmonious, it is a true expression of the Greek genius.

Sculpture

Much of the sculpture of the classic age was closely connected with architecture, but there were many famous individual pieces as well. Greek sculpture was once known largely through copies made in Roman times, and even today the famous statues are known only at second hand. During the present century, however, archeologists have unearthed countless fragments dating from the fifth century which show the skill of the sculptors and the progress they had made over earlier times. They had learned to copy the human body with amazing skill, and they had discovered graceful and natural poses for their models. While many statues depict gods and scenes from mythology, others show athletes, sometimes in action and sometimes at rest. The supreme triumph of Greek sculpture, however, is to be seen in the famous marbles (now in the British Museum) which Phidias carved for the Parthenon.

Hellenistic styles

The third century saw immense activity among artists. The building of new cities required the services of architects, sculptors, and painters, and such artists were subsidized lavishly by kings and private individuals. The new patrons of the arts were parvenus and adventurers, not deeply rooted in the old traditions, but they were prosperous, they wished to live luxuriously, and they demanded something new from their artists. They wanted large and imposing houses, costly furniture, sumptuous decorations, rich food, numerous slaves, and women embellished with plenty of cosmetics. Size became important, and some works of art—such as the Colossus at Rhodes—were considered great primarily because they were "colossal." The harmony and simplicity of classic Greek architecture gave way to elaboration and ostentation, as when simple Doric and Ionic capitals were superseded by the more ornate Corinthian. Sculptors represented their characters in theatrical and unnatural poses, and there always was an air of sophistication about them—that is to say, they were superficial and insincere.

Hellenistic works of art

Nevertheless, Hellenistic artists accomplished many remarkable things. The most significant work of the period was done in Asia Minor by the schools of Pergamum and Rhodes. Little remains to us from these artists except fragments and Roman copies, yet among them are several of the world's most famous statues. The Victory of Samothrace, the Dying Gaul, and the Gaul and His Wife date from the third century; the Venus de Milo and Apollo Belvedere come



LAOCOÖN. One of the most famous of Hellenistic statues, made by three Rhodians about 40 B.C. (Vatican Museum)

from the second; and the Laocoön group from the first. New types of art appeared also in Hellenistic times. The laying out of new cities permitted more careful town planning. Parks and open places, beautified by statues, fountains, and gardens, now relieved the crowded and unsightly conditions that prevailed in the older cities. The Greeks had formerly paid little attention to landscaping, which they now learned from the Persians, who had long been celebrated for their parks filled with cultivated fruits and flowers. In classic times statues had sometimes been part of the architecture of temples or other public buildings, but more frequently they were set up around shrines; as new statues were constantly being added, the place must eventually have presented a rather cluttered appearance. Hellenistic sculptors continued to make statues for such purposes, but they also made busts and other small works for private houses and gardens, and several of their most celebrated pieces were set up in parks, where they must have been extremely effective.

THE LEGACY OF GREECE

"The Greek miracle"

In these few pages we have found space to touch upon only a few of the achievements of the Greek people, but perhaps enough has been said to indicate that they were the most important people of antiquity—the most significant, that is to say, for the future civilization of Europe and of mankind. They were quarrelsome and arrogant, failures in the art of government, undistinguished as engineers or mechanics; they were good businessmen and traders, but it was in the realms of the mind that they showed their true superiority. They laid the foundations of European literature and art, of science and philosophy, and in each of these fields except natural science they equaled or surpassed the best of their successors. They created and lived in an atmosphere of intellectual liberty and free discussion, and they were the first among men to free themselves from the shackles of gross superstition. Higher civilization, as we understand it, began with the ancient Greeks.

Later influence of the Greeks

In the second and first centuries before Christ educated Romans were deeply influenced by the Hellenistic Greeks, and in general their instincts led them to admire the Greek rather than the oriental elements in Hellenistic culture. They were thus led back to a study of the Hellenic culture of earlier times. The Fathers of the early Christian Church owed an equal debt to Greece, and they preserved

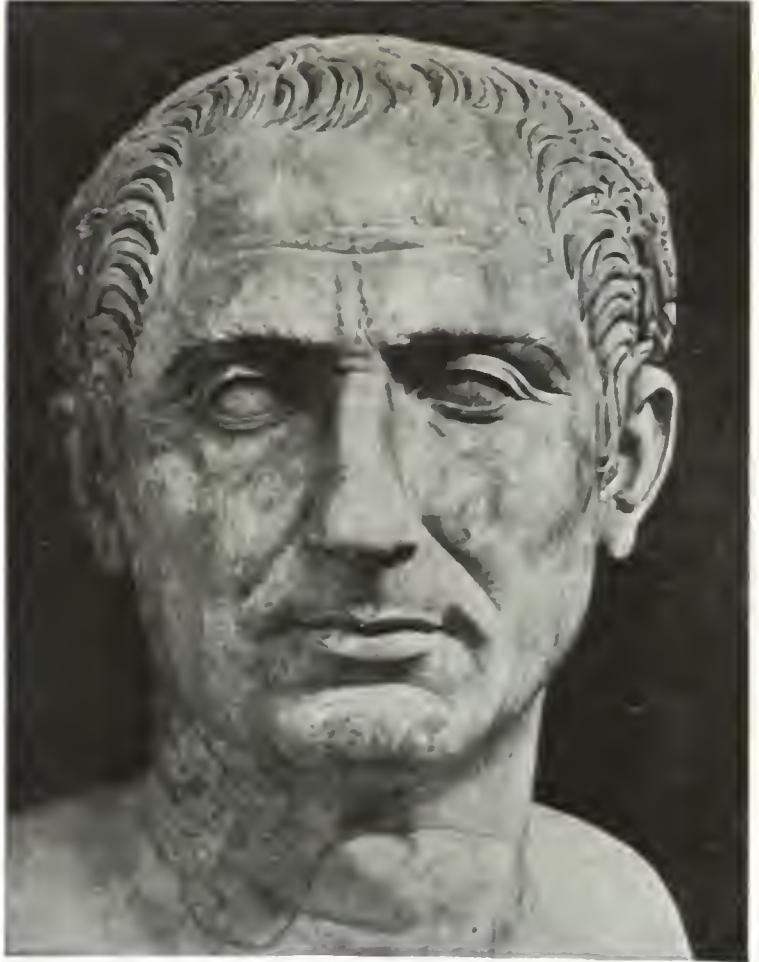
most of what the Middle Ages knew about Greek culture. The new intellectual leaders of Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries spoke much of Greece, but they saw her largely through Roman eyes. When artists wished to imitate Greek statues, they used Roman copies as models; architects knew Greek architecture through Roman buildings; and scholars studied Greek literature only after saturating themselves in Latin literature. During the urbane and Rome-admiring eighteenth century, knowledge of Greece declined sadly in Europe, but early in the nineteenth century came a great revival of interest in all things Greek, and the Greek language was widely taught and studied. The nineteenth was one of the truly great centuries in the history of human thought and civilization, and its debt to ancient Greece was immense.

Today Greek has again become a dead language, but there are always ways in which men can familiarize themselves with the great achievements of Greece and imbibe something of her spirit. The masterpieces of her art can still be studied, and her literature, science, and philosophy are easily available in translation. Those who wish to direct their lives according to the dictates of reason, who consider intellectual integrity their dearest possession, will always find sympathy and inspiration in the famous Greeks who distinguished themselves by these very virtues. It would indeed be a sad thing for humanity if there were no knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the Greek miracle.

**The Greek
spirit today**

IV

Julius Caesar (Naples Museum)



ROME'S WORLD EMPIRE

ANCIENT ITALY—ROME AS AN IMPERIAL STATE

B.C.	Military and Political Events	Conquests	Contemporary Events
2000	Bronze age invaders		Achaeans, Hittites
1000	Iron age invaders		Dorians, Phrygians
900-700	Etruscans in Italy		Phoenicians in North Africa
750-500	Greeks in Italy and Sicily		
600-500	Etruscan kings in Rome		
509	Roman Republic		Cleisthenes in Athens
494-367	Struggle of the Orders		Periclean Age in Athens
340-338	Latin War	Latium	
326-270	Samnite and Greek wars	Italy	Alexander the Great (d. 323)
264-241	First Punic War	Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica	
218-201	Second Punic War	Spain	Hannibal (d. 184)
200-167	Macedonian Wars		Antiochus III (d. 187)
149-146	Third Punic War	Carthage	
146	Sack of Carinith		
133	Tiberius Gracchus	Pergamum acquired	
123-121	Gaius Gracchus	Southern Gaul (120)	
104-100	Marius consul		
90-88	Italian Social War		
88-63	Mithridatic Wars	Asia Minor	
82-79	Sulla dictator		
70	Pompey and Crassus consuls	Pompey annexes Syria (64)	
60-53	First Triumvirate	Caesar conquers Gaul (58-51)	Parthian War (53)
49-44	Civil War Caesar (d. 44)		
43-31	Second Triumvirate	Octavian annexes Egypt	Cleopatra (d. 30)
27-A.D. 14	Augustus	Rhine-Danube frontier	Herod the Great (d. 4 B.C.)
A.D. 14-68	Julio-Claudian Emperors	Britain, Mauretania	
70-96	Flavian Emperors		
96-180	"Good Emperors"	Dacia	

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See Map
Facing
Page 198
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10. ANCIENT ITALY

THE empire of Alexander the Great collapsed with the passing of its creator. During the years that followed, when rival generals were scourging the world with their wars, men everywhere sighed for a return of the political unity which he had brought and in whose restoration they saw their only hope for peace. Statesmen, businessmen, and philosophers dreamed of uniting the world, but they never knew just what sort of union they wanted or how to bring it about. No one Hellenistic empire could absorb the other two, and federal union demanded mutual sacrifices that no Hellenistic ruler would seriously consider. In Hellenistic times, as in the mid-twentieth century, nearly everyone wanted peace but no one knew how to get it.

Then Rome came upon the scene, and within an amazingly short period she united the civilized world under her rule. The civilized area of the world had by this time shifted further west, to include lands unknown to Alexander, yet we may say that, shortly before the birth of Christ, the Romans restored the world unity that Alexander had momentarily achieved three centuries before. Their empire lasted five hundred years, and during the first half of this period men enjoyed peace on earth as never before or since in human history. For two centuries and a half, one generation of men after another confidently and reasonably looked forward to peace in their time. The Romans succeeded where the Greeks had failed, and the story of their success is the major theme of their history. But how was Rome prepared for this gigantic task of uniting and ruling the Western world? What were the steps by which she accomplished her mighty undertaking? And what price did she pay for her victory? These are the questions we shall discuss in the present chapter.

*Hellenistic
longing
for peace*

*Peace
brought
by Rome*

**Geography
of Italy**

Ancient Italy covered considerably less territory than the modern Italian state. The Po Valley and the northern provinces of modern Italy were then classified with Gaul, and ancient geographers never regarded Sicily or Sardinia as parts of Italy. Between them, these regions make up slightly more than half the area of modern Italy, and they contain much more than half its population. Ancient Italy was only the peninsula south of the Apennine Mountains. Its most important part, lying between the mountains and the western Mediterranean, may be divided into three great zones. Etruria extends from the northern Apennines south to the Tiber River and the sea; Latium, the land of the Latins, lies south of the Tiber along the Mediterranean; further south, in the vicinity of Naples, are the fertile fields of Campania. The extreme south—the “toe” and “heel” of Italy—was less important than these three areas, and the region east of the mountains, along the Adriatic, was of little value. The total area of ancient Italy (about 59,000 square miles, roughly the size of Michigan) was more than twice that of continental Greece, but her mountains were less extensive and her soil was far more fertile than that of her neighbor. Ancient Italy could therefore support three or four times the population of ancient Greece.

**Early
invasions**

Before 5000 B.C. Italy was invaded by men of Mediterranean type from Africa, those in the south coming by way of Sicily while those in the north apparently advanced past Gibraltar through Spain and southern France. These men were only remotely related to their contemporaries, the early Minoan settlers in Crete and Greece; their civilization was rudely neolithic; and though they were visited occasionally by Cretan traders, they absorbed little Minoan culture. At about the time when the Achaeans began settling in Greece (2000 B.C.), a kindred people crossed the Brenner Pass from Austria to invade the Po Valley. Other Europeans later occupied central and southern Italy, with a final invasion from the north roughly contemporary with the Dorian invasion of Greece. Finding no civilization comparable to the Minoan civilization of Greece in their new homes, these northern invaders went through no stage of culture to parallel the Mycenaean. Higher civilization reached Italy only in the first millennium before Christ.

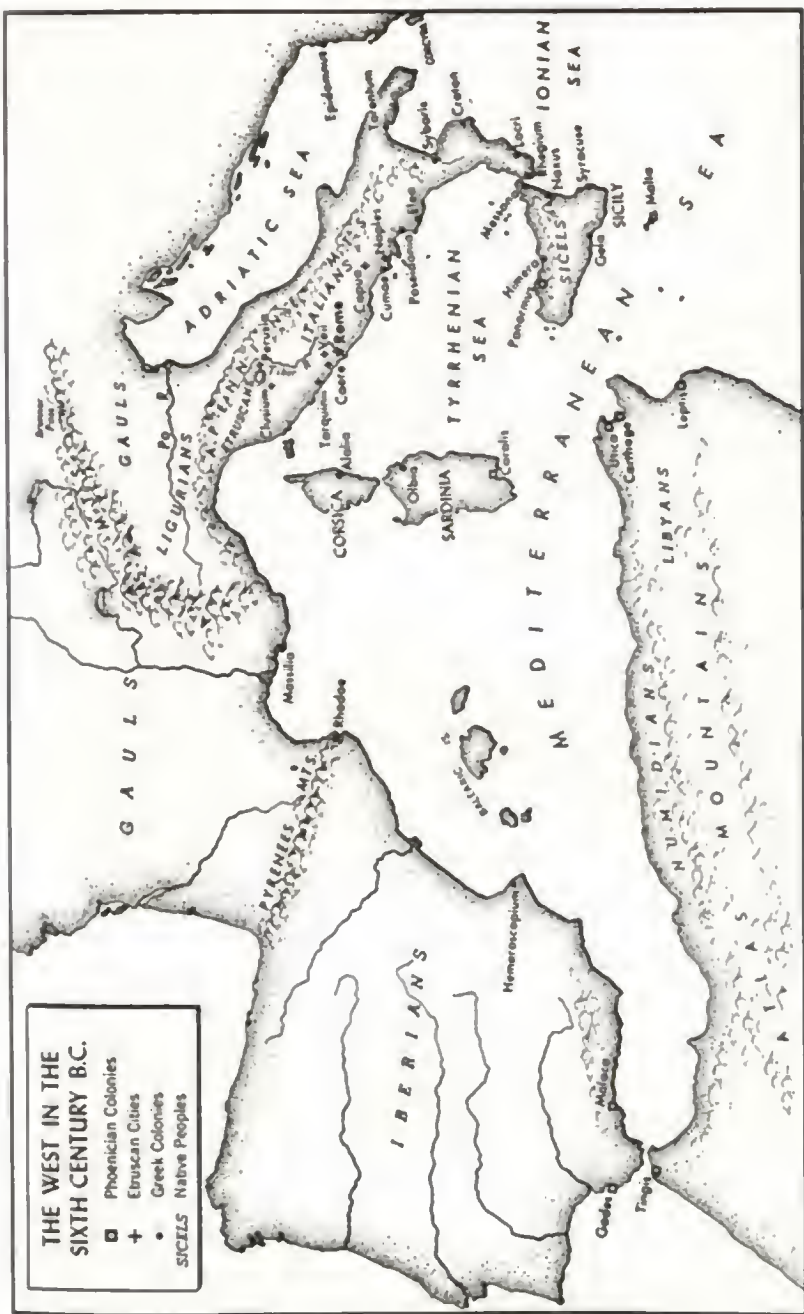
**Phoenicians,
Etruscans,
Greeks**

The Phoenicians were the first people from the eastern Mediterranean area to exercise a marked cultural influence in the West. As early as 900 B.C. mariners from Tyre had established a trading post at Gades (modern Cadiz) in Spain outside Gibraltar. Within another century

THE WEST IN THE SIXTH CENTURY B.C.

- Phoenician Colonies
- + Etruscan Cities
- Greek Colonies
- Native Peoples

SICILY



Tyrians held numerous other posts in the West, and North African Carthage presently became the center of a Punic (that is, a Phoenician) empire. No Phoenicians settled in Italy, however, and their culture had little influence there. More important were the Etruscans, who came at about the same time from western Asia Minor. They built cities in Etruria, traded extensively with other parts of Italy, and even crossed the Apennines into the Po Valley. They were highly gifted in commerce and the arts, and they were the first to civilize Italy. Shortly before 700 B.C., Greek colonists began settling in southern Italy and Sicily. They confined the Etruscans to the north, but the Etruscans kept the Greeks from advancing north of Cumae, near the modern Naples. Other Greeks settled in southern France, near modern Marseilles, and along the Riviera, while a few even reached northern Spain. The sixth century witnessed an intermittent three-cornered warfare between these invaders of the West, but in the end all three were conquered by the Romans.

EARLY ROME

Coming of the Latins

Latium was one of the last parts of Italy to be settled, and though the Latins were among the last of the northern peoples to invade Italy, they found few earlier inhabitants when they entered the region about 1100 B.C. For several centuries they remained shepherds and farmers, living in hilltop villages and making little cultural progress. One of their villages was Rome, whose earliest traces date from about 1000 B.C.

Rome's strategic position

Rome was foreordained by nature and geography to be more than a country village. Situated on the Tiber River about twelve miles above its mouth, the city occupied a point where an island facilitated fording the stream. This was the river's lowest crossing and, as the higher fords led into difficult hill country, traders proceeding from Etruria to Campania preferred to cross the Tiber at Rome. A second trade route, ascending the river on the Latin side, also passed through the city. Rome was thus well located as a trading center. Its strategic location caused Etruscan traders to occupy the city early in the sixth century, when an Etruscan leader became its king. By draining a swamp to make a market place (later called the *forum*) and by surrounding the city with walls, the Etruscans made Rome the largest and most important city in central Italy. They then seized other



ROMAN WOLF. This statue was probably made by an Etruscan artist, though the Romans always honored the wolf that allegedly suckled Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of their city. The twins were added to this statue at the time of the Renaissance.

strong points in Latium, and Capua, in northern Campania, became one of their principal cities.

Though the Etruscans made Rome a great city, they won the hatred of the Latins and they were driven from the city about 509 B.C. The Latin rebels then founded the Roman Republic. A little later the Etruscans were likewise expelled from the rest of Latium, thereby losing their valuable trade route to Capua and Campania. Their vigorous efforts to regain what had been lost brought long years of war, during which the new rulers of Rome allied themselves with other Latins in what they called the Latin League. Before long, however, the Etruscans entered upon a decline, partly because of their loss of trade, partly because of defeats by their ancient Greek enemies, partly because of frequent attacks by Gauls from the north, and partly because of the victories of the Latin League. After 400 B.C. they could no longer be accounted a menace to Rome.

During this first century of the Republic many of the characteristics and institutions that later distinguished the Roman people were firmly fixed. As Rome was for a century the spearhead of all Italian re-

**Etruscan
kings
expelled**

**The Roman
Republic**

sistance to the Etruscans, her citizens developed a strong spirit of military discipline, and the city attracted adventurous and skillful warriors from neighboring states. Moreover, the Latin farmers, by expelling Etruscan traders along with the Etruscan kings, had dealt a crippling blow to the economic life of the city. The ensuing depression severely tried the statesmanship of Rome's ruling class. These new rulers did not become businessmen themselves, but they learned to encourage and regulate trade. They policed the forum, organized and regulated the market, protected the traders, and charged fees for their services. When the traders found that they got their money's worth in protection and fair practice by paying these fees, Rome again became an important trading center. It was a polyglot city, full of Italians, Etruscans, and Greeks, but it was ruled by a Latin aristocracy of landowners, soldiers, and statesmen.

*Rome a
cosmopol-
itan city*

These experiences gave Rome valuable training for her future role as governor of the world. Taking little direct part in the trading of the forum, the Roman officials had no desire to interfere in economic life. They therefore followed the Greek practice of allowing economic liberty rather than erecting royal or priestly bureaucracies to regulate it, as in the ancient Orient. Moreover, the fact that her people were of such diverse origin trained Rome to become the most successful welder-together of races and peoples that the world ever knew before the rise of modern America. The people who migrated to Rome brought with them a wide variety of cultures, and the Romans readily took over whatever they found useful. Nevertheless, the remarkable tenacity with which they retained their own fundamental institutions enabled the Romans to preserve their individuality.

Patricians and Plebeians

*Family
system*

With the earliest Romans, as with most early pastoral peoples, the family was the fundamental social unit. The father was head of the family, and his paternal authority was taken as the model of all authority, political or other. Families were united in larger groups, each called a *gens*, and these *gentes* were grouped in two "orders": a few were aristocratic, or "patrician," while the remainder were "plebeian." The aristocratic patricians were wealthy landowners, but they also held the political offices, commanded the armies, and directed the affairs of the Republic. As they held all political author-

ity in the state, they were called *patres*, "fathers." Most of the patrician families had been prominent in the days of the Etruscan kings, and it was they who led the Roman Revolution of 509 against these Etruscans. Being determined to keep the power they thus seized, they refused thereafter to admit new families into their caste.

Equally important at Rome was the institution known as "clientage." In early times, when Latium was a purely agricultural community, all Latins presumably were either patrons or clients. The former were the rich landowners, the latter worked in the patrons' fields. The patron was supposed to look after his clients, defending their interests in a patriarchal manner, while they rendered him filial service and obedience. The failure of either to perform his duties was considered a grave offense by everyone.

The patricians were a small caste of patrons, all having large clienteles, but not all plebeians were of one sort. In early times the great majority had been clients of the patricians, but many later became independent landowners, others were workers or traders in Rome (these men may once have been reckoned as clients of the king), others were important people who had migrated to the city since 509 (some of them having large estates and many clients of their own in other parts of Italy), and still others were the prosperous businessmen of Rome. As one part of a client's duty was to vote as his patron suggested, and as the plebeians were divided among themselves and without effective leadership, the political life of the Roman Republic was directed by a rather small inner circle of patrician patrons whose clients swamped the elections. We shall see that when the institution of clientage began to wane, late in the second century before Christ, the Roman aristocracy and the Republic itself went into decline.

The economic depression that followed the Revolution of 509 caused the numerous disturbances at Rome that collectively are called "the struggle of the orders"—i.e., the struggle of the plebeians against the patricians, or more accurately, of the urban plebs against the patricians and their rural clients. Sometimes the insurgents demanded economic reforms, and a few such reforms were granted, but the sufferings of the plebeians were alleviated more effectively by Rome's recuperation as a commercial center and by the conquest of new territory. On other occasions the plebeians demanded political or constitutional reforms. They thus secured the right to elect certain of-

Clientage

**Not all
plebeians
are clients**

**Struggle
of the
orders**

ficials (tribunes) from their own order; they demanded that the laws be codified and written down; and, above all, they clamored for the right to hold office in the Republic. The resistance of the patricians was long and bitter, but in the end the plebeians won. After 300 a plebeian could legally hold any office to which he might be elected. It must not be assumed, however, that the leaders whom the plebeians elected were simply peasants who had made good. It was still true that only wealthy men with large clienteles could be elected, and most of the new officeholders were aristocrats from other parts of Italy who had migrated to Rome, and who ordinarily saw eye to eye with the old Roman patricians. The newcomers who reached the higher offices came to form a second rank in the aristocracy and were known as the plebeian nobility.

**Senate and
assemblies**

When the struggle of the orders was over, about 300, the government of Rome was firmly established as an aristocratic Republic. The determination of policy fell to the *senate*, made up of former officeholders appointed for life: its members sprang from the patrician class or the new plebeian nobility. The entire citizen body met in *assemblies* (*comitia*) to ratify laws passed by the senate and to elect magistrates, but as the only well-organized group of citizens in the assembly consisted of the clients of the aristocracy, these aristocrats easily controlled its proceedings.

**Roman
magistrates**

Roman magistrates held office for one year only, and there always were two or more magistrates of equal power in the same office. The principal magistrates were the two *consuls*, who commanded the armies, presided over meetings of the senate and some of the assemblies, and had general executive power. The *praetors* presided over the courts; the *quaestors* were treasury officials; and the *aediles* supervised business in the forum and had general police powers. The *censors* (who were elected every five years) took the census, appointed men to fill vacancies in the senate, and let public contracts. One of their early victories gave plebeians the right to elect *tribunes* from their own order as defenders against the patricians, and these tribunes eventually became highly important because of their right to veto any law proposed in the senate. After 287 they could propose laws to assemblies over which they presided; if passed by the assembly, these laws had equal force with those approved by the senate. In times of emergency a *dictator* might be appointed who held absolute power for a period not longer than six months.

CONQUEST OF ITALY

For 170 years after the Revolution of 509 Rome held only a small strip of territory on each side of the Tiber from the city to the sea, a total of not more than three or four hundred square miles. During the next 170 years (338-167), she made herself the dominant military power in the Mediterranean world, fearing no rival or possible coalition of rivals. A third period of about equal length (167 B.C.-A.D. 14) saw the completion of her conquests, the collapse of the Republic, and the establishment of a centralized Empire ruling the civilized world. From that day to this, the story of how Rome accomplished so much in so short a time has inspired enthusiasts but it has puzzled historians.

We must not look for any conscious plan behind Rome's empire building. No one foresaw or desired the outcome by which she eventually became the mistress of the world. From time to time the Romans found themselves at war, and as they were good soldiers, they usually won sooner or later. But it must not be assumed that they were conspicuously aggressive. Sometimes they showed themselves to be bad neighbors, quarrelsome and quick to see intolerable insults in the conduct of others; sometimes war offered land or other material wealth; on other occasions reckless leaders stirred up wars in the hope of enhancing their own personal prestige by victory; but just as often Rome was attacked by others or dragged into wars by the intrigues of allies who hoped to profit by the anticipated victories of her splendid armies. The important thing about Rome's wars was that her wiser statesmen were not satisfied with mere victory. They usually insisted that it be followed by a peace that satisfied everyone, victors and vanquished alike. In general, they were able to find such peace terms, and in most cases the conquered peoples soon came to feel themselves better off than they had been before. It was with extreme reluctance that Rome entered upon her great foreign wars, and with even greater reluctance that she annexed territory overseas. Paradoxical as it may sound, the truth is that Rome's world empire was created by a nation of "isolationists."

The middle period of the history of the Republic, during which Rome established her military ascendancy, began in 338 and lasted until 167. It may be subdivided into three parts. A series of wars between 338 and 270 gave her control of Italy. Two wars with Carthage (264-201) left her dominant in the western Mediterranean. And

**Rapidity
of Rome's
conquests**

**Roman
conquests
not
planned**

**Steps in
world
conquest**

three wars with the Greeks (200–167) made her the leading military power in the Mediterranean world. Of these three periods, the first was by far the most significant.

**The Latin
League**

Soon after the expulsion of the Etruscans, as we have seen, Romans and Latins allied themselves in the Latin League for mutual protection. This League survived for more than a hundred years, and on countless occasions the allies fought side by side against Etruscans and other enemies. But when the Etruscan danger declined, the Latins became restless and wished to withdraw from the League. Rome refused to permit such resignations, and at last a serious rebellion broke out. In the ensuing war Rome was victorious, the allies were dragged back into the League, and their rebellion was punished by the confiscation of about one-third of their lands (338). Thereafter Rome clearly was the leader of the League and her allies could have no independent foreign policy. In local matters, however, their freedom and self-government remained, and the allies presently were granted important rights and privileges in Rome itself. Reconciled to their new status, the Latins soon dropped all thoughts of further rebellion.

**Samnite
wars**

During this war, the Latins had entered into an alliance with nearby Capua, after which the victorious Romans occupied that city. Rome herself then made an alliance with Capua, primarily to keep her from entering any new anti-Roman coalition. A few years later, however, Capua was attacked by Samnite hillmen from central Italy and called upon her Roman ally for aid. This aid being forthcoming, the Samnites were presently defeated. They too were made allies of Rome. They were forbidden to wage war against Rome or her allies, or to enter into alliances with any state except Rome, and their troops had to help Rome thereafter in her wars. A small amount of land was confiscated and given to Roman settlers, but the new allies retained complete autonomy in local matters. Presently they found themselves at war with other tribes of Samnites, and the alliance dragged Rome into the new conflict. Thus arose a series of Samnite wars whose details need not detain us. When they were over, about 300, all the peoples of central Italy were allied to Rome. By a very similar process the Etruscan cities and the hillmen of north central Italy were added to Rome's allies within the next few years.

**Pyrrhus
and the
Greeks**

Only the Greek cities of southern Italy then remained outside the Roman sphere. Shortly after 290 Tarentum, the most important of these cities, embarked upon a program of vigorous aggression, hoping

to found a Greek empire in Italy. One of her frightened neighbors (Thurii) appealed to Rome for aid against the aggressor, and after considerable hesitation the Romans complied. The citizens of Tarentum then called in a Greek adventurer named Pyrrhus (a nephew of Alexander the Great). In 280 he crossed to Italy with an army of twenty thousand mercenaries, hoping to unite the western Greeks and the Italians by promising them "freedom" from Rome. He defeated the Romans in the first battle, but Rome's Italian allies refused to join him. They preferred to trust Rome. Losing interest in Italy, Pyrrhus then attempted to conquer Sicily instead. Failing again, he returned to Italy, was badly defeated by the Romans in a second battle fought at Beneventum (275), and withdrew to Greece, where he was killed. When the Romans occupied the Greek cities, including Tarentum itself in 272, all Italy south of the Apennines was in their hands.

This conquest of Italy set the pattern by which Rome eventually absorbed the Mediterranean world, and her reorganization of Italy after the conquest taught her how to unite that world politically. Each tiny city-state in Italy was bound to Rome by a separate treaty of alliance. As these alliances forbade Rome's allies to wage war with each other or with her, Rome unexpectedly found herself the leader of a league to enforce peace in Italy. After each victory the Romans confiscated part of the lands of the Italian city (rarely as much as one-third), upon which they settled Roman colonists. It has been estimated that about fifty thousand Romans (or perhaps one-fifth of the Roman people) thus received small farms between 338 and 270. These land distributions relieved the economic distress at Rome, and they undoubtedly made the wars popular, but they were not the fundamental and primary cause of the wars. After the land settlements were made, and peace treaties had been concluded, Rome imposed no further punishment upon her new allies. The Italians quickly learned how much they gained from Roman protection, and their traders prospered by doing business over all Italy. In return for all this, they lost no liberty save that of starting wars. They therefore quickly reconciled themselves to their kind fate.

**Reorgani-
zation of
Italy**

THE PUNIC WARS (264-146)

In the sixth century before Christ, Carthage was the head of an empire that included settlements in northern Africa from Carthage west to Gibraltar, in southern Spain, in Sardinia and Corsica, and

Carthage

above all in Sicily. In the latter island the Carthaginians waged frequent wars with the Greek cities, especially Syracuse. Sometimes they held all Sicily except Syracuse, and sometimes the Syracusans held everything except one Punic fortress at the western tip of the island. Carthage was a rich and powerful city, famous throughout the Mediterranean world. Her commercial civilization bore the earmarks of its Semitic origin, and influenced North Africa and Sicily deeply, but she made no noteworthy contributions to literature or art. Her government was an aristocratic republic, dominated by rich Punic traders, and she was the most powerful state in the West.

*Early
treaties
with Rome*

Carthage opened diplomatic relations with the Roman Republic in the very first year of the Republic (509), concluding a treaty of friendship which probably was intended merely to encourage the Roman rebels who were causing trouble for Carthage's Etruscan rivals. A second treaty in 348 was of no great importance. Roman conquests in southern Italy brought the two powers closer to each other's territory, however, and in 306 they signed a treaty by which Carthage agreed to keep out of Italy while Rome promised not to invade Sicily. When Pyrrhus invaded Italy, the two powers promised each other aid against him (279). His departure severed this bond of union, however, and before long the two leading powers of the West were at war with one another.

*The First
Punic War
(264-241)*

The immediate occasion for hostilities was ridiculous and discreditable to all concerned (both parties claimed the right of defending the "liberties" of some gangsters in Messina against the "aggression" of Syracuse), but the war which began in 264 dragged on for twenty-three years. It was fought largely in Sicily, with the armies of Rome and her Italian allies facing Punic mercenaries, but victory was won at sea when a newly constructed Roman navy destroyed the Punic fleet (242), thus making it impossible for Carthage to provision her mercenaries and laying Africa itself open to invasion. The treaty of peace (241) required Carthage to surrender all her possessions in Sicily and pay an indemnity.

*Sardinia
and Corsica
seized (238)*

Unfortunately Carthage still had worse to suffer. After the war, when she could not pay off her mercenaries, they revolted and were joined by many native Africans. Three years of atrocious civil war followed, but at last the rebels were crushed. Meantime other mercenaries, stationed in Sardinia and Corsica, had likewise rebelled. When the Carthaginians finally sent troops to deal with this second insurrection, Rome threatened to renew the war as champion of the

insurgents' "liberty." Carthage surrendered the two islands and promised an increased indemnity (238).

The loss of Sicily was a severe blow to her trade, and Carthage might have declined to the rank of a petty agricultural state had not her citizens decided to recoup their losses by developing a new empire in Spain. An able leader, Hamilcar, was put in charge of the enterprise (238), and when he died ten years later he firmly held the southern half of that peninsula. His son-in-law continued his work, founded New Carthage (now Cartagena), and pushed the frontier north to the Ebro River. When he died in 221 he was succeeded by Hamilcar's son, the famous Hannibal, who was soon to prove himself one of the most brilliant generals of ancient times.

*Carthage's
empire
in Spain*

At first the Romans paid little attention to Hamilcar's activities in Spain, but when excited persons began warning them that he was preparing to invade Italy from the north, they made a treaty with his son-in-law by which the Punic commander promised not to advance north of the Ebro River. A little later the Romans entered into an alliance with Saguntum, a Spanish seaport south of the Ebro not yet taken over by the Carthaginians. Soon after coming into power, Hannibal declared this alliance to be a violation of the Ebro treaty and took advantage of civil disturbances in Saguntum to occupy the city. Rome replied by declaring war (218).

*The Second
Punic War
(218-201)*

Hannibal had foreseen such action and had made preparations for the war which he deemed inevitable. With a large and well-trained army he crossed the Ebro, hurried through southern France, eluded the Roman legions sent to stop him, and crossed the Alps into the Po Valley. Here he won two victories over the Romans late in 218. The next year he defeated and virtually annihilated another Roman army, and in 216 he won his most brilliant victory at Cannae in southern Italy. The Roman losses on that tragic day amounted to about forty thousand men, including one consul, eighty senators, and several former consuls. It was said that almost every family in Rome was in mourning until the senate forbade further demonstrations of grief. Hannibal, following the precedent set by Pyrrhus, then announced that his sole purpose was to free Italy from Roman domination and invited the allies to join him. Capua and several Greek cities opened their gates, but the Italians of central Italy remained loyal to Rome. A century of fair treatment thus paid Rome big dividends.

*Hannibal's
early
victories*

For a few years after Cannae the Roman armies were commanded by a general named Q. Fabius Maximus (d. 203), who adopted the

*Fabius
Maximus*

cautious policy of refusing to fight a pitched battle. He kept his army together, however, and, by thus forcing Hannibal to do the same, prevented him from occupying large sections of Italy. As Rome's forces gradually regained their strength, and Hannibal's lost their victory-inspired enthusiasm, the tide of war began to turn. Capua and Tarentum were retaken and punished severely for their defection (211 and 209). Syracuse, which had joined Hannibal, was captured by the Romans (211). Roman armies in Spain took New Carthage (209), and Hannibal could receive no further reinforcements. He suffered no defeat in the field, but neither did he win any victory after Cannae.

**Scipio
Africanus
(237-183)**

Then came young Scipio, later known as Scipio Africanus (237-183). His father, consul in 218, had been wounded in the first major battle of the war and was later killed in Spain (212). After fighting at Cannae, young Scipio too had joined the Roman army in Spain. Returning to Rome as a victor when barely thirty years of age, he was elected consul for 205. In opposition to Fabius, Scipio declared that the war could be won only by aggressive action and insisted on landing an army in Africa. His operation was successful and the panicky Carthaginian senate ordered Hannibal back from Italy. After long maneuvering, the two armies met at Zama in 202. Here Hannibal suffered his first defeat, and Carthage was forced to accept whatever peace terms Scipio offered (201). She surrendered all her remaining territory except the immediate vicinity of the city—an area about equal to the modern Tunisia. Spain was transferred to Rome, North Africa to a Numidian chieftain who had aided Scipio. Carthage was disarmed and forbidden to wage wars, even defensive wars, without Rome's express permission. And finally, Carthage was compelled to pay an indemnity in fifty annual installments.

**The Third
Punic War
(149-146)**

Carthage never regained her position as a world power, but as time went on she became a moderately prosperous trading city. For many years Rome paid little attention to her old rival, but eventually anti-Punic agitation again arose. As we cannot believe that sensible Romans now feared Carthage, we must attribute this renewed agitation to the exigencies of domestic politics and to a fear that the Numidians might capture the city and make it the capital of a new African empire. At any rate, Rome attacked Carthage, on a frivolous pretext (149), and three years later Scipio Aemilianus (adoptive grandson of Africanus) destroyed the city completely and annexed its territory to Rome as the province of Africa Proconsularis.

GREECE (200-167)

Hannibal had marched up and down Italy for fifteen years, inflicting fearful damage wherever he went, and hundreds of thousands of Romans and allies had lost their lives. It might almost seem that Rome would have had enough war for a while, yet the fact is that two years after the battle of Zama she embarked upon a major campaign against Macedonia, one of the three great empires of the Hellenistic East. How is this surprising action to be accounted for?

Romans had been in contact with Greeks and the Greek civilization of southern Italy even under the monarchy, and after the conquest of southern Italy, aristocratic families learned Greek and bought Greek slaves to instruct their children. The Greek culture they absorbed was Hellenistic rather than Hellenic, yet they came to admire it, and they frequently expressed their romantic and sentimental enthusiasm for Greece, the land of culture and light. Certainly they had no desire to destroy it or even to subjugate it.

The Greeks, on the other hand, for a generation or two after Pyrrhus, knew little about Rome and cared even less. Then, shortly before Hannibal took over the rule of Spain, the young, ambitious, and popular Philip V became king of Macedon (220-179). On his mother's side Philip was descended from Pyrrhus, and one of his ambitions was to found a Greek empire in Italy such as his ancestor had attempted. Hannibal's first victories seemed to open the way for conquest at the expense of Rome, and Philip began active preparations. Cannae dashed his hopes to the ground, however, and in the next year he entered into an alliance with Hannibal. He gave his ally no aid, but he was at war with Rome until 205, when Scipio made peace in order to have his hands free for the invasion of Africa. After Zama had eliminated Hannibal, many Romans felt that they still had a little unfinished business with Philip. Others, jealous of Scipio's mighty reputation, dreamed of winning even greater glory for themselves by conquests in the Greek East.

Such was the situation at Rome when ambassadors from various minor Greek states arrived in the city, begging for aid against alleged aggressions by Philip. Controversy at Rome was long and bitter, but war was declared at the end of 200. Unfortunately the demagogues who had shouted Rome into the war were less successful in fighting it. A new general named Titus Flamininus (230?-174)

**Why wars
with
Greece?**

**Roman
admiration
for Greek
culture**

**Philip V
of Macedon**

**Greece
"freed" by
Flamininus
(196)**



then proved himself more competent, ending the war with a decisive victory at Cynoscephalae (197). The peace treaty which Flaminius made in 196 remained the foundation of Roman policy in Greece for more than a hundred years. He sincerely admired the Greeks and he believed that their troubles were due to the lawless aggressions of Philip. If only each city-state were given what was justly hers, he believed, peace would prevail. He therefore redrew the map of Greece and declared all the Greek states "free." Philip had to pay an indemnity to Rome, but Flaminius asked for no territory, and within a few months all Roman troops were withdrawn from Greece and Macedonia.

*Failure of
Rome's
idealism*

The idealistic Flaminius has sometimes been likened to Woodrow Wilson, and his treaty compared to the famous Fourteen Points. Each of these idealistic statesmen believed in peace and justice, but each was sadly uninformed regarding the sordid realities of foreign politics. The Greek states which Flaminius saved from Philip did not want

justice. They wanted more territory, and within a short time they began complaining that they had little or nothing to show for all their alleged sufferings.

The Seleucid ruler in Syria at this time was Antiochus III (223-187). The Greeks had lost much in Asia since the days of Alexander, especially to the Parthians, whose "Second Persian Empire" (see page 77) included most of modern Iran. In his early days Antiochus regained much of what had been lost and then defeated Ptolemy V of Egypt (200), annexing Palestine and later marrying his daughter to the young Ptolemy so that through her he might dominate Egypt. Only Macedonia and Greece, plus a few small Greek states in Asia Minor, stood between Antiochus and the realization of his life ambition of ruling Alexander's former empire. Antiochus was therefore happy to listen when disgruntled Greeks began talking about the callous insolence and injustice shown by the Romans in Greece. When they gently hinted that he, Antiochus, the world's leading Greek, was the man to settle disputes in Greece, he was not displeased. He readily promised a new settlement of Greece in which his new friends would receive more ample "justice," and they began preparing to take over various coveted territories from their neighbors. The terrified neighbors rushed to Rome, reminded the senate of Flaminius's treaty, and pointedly asked whether Rome's signature to a treaty was of any significance. Rome therefore warned Antiochus not to meddle in Greek affairs.

**Antiochus
III of Syria**

Antiochus had no desire to quarrel with the Romans, but he did not propose to let them stand in his way. Moreover, he was constantly being egged on by his Greek friends and by Hannibal, who had recently fled to him from Carthage. He therefore invaded Greece, and Rome declared war (192). Antiochus suffered defeat and returned to Asia Minor. The Romans, led by Scipio Africanus and his brother, followed him at leisure, and at Magnesia they dealt him a crushing blow (189). They forced him to surrender all his territories in Asia Minor to Eumenes II (heretofore the minor Greek king of Pergamum), to give up his navy, and to pay an indemnity. Again Rome took no territory for herself and withdraw her troops as soon as possible.

**Magnesia
(189)**

Two years later Antiochus was murdered by a religious fanatic in Babylon (187), and within a short time much of the Greek East was in rebellion. The Parthian kingdom revived, and other Orientals believed that the time had come to regain their liberty by ejecting the

**Eumenes
and Perseus**

Greek conquerors. The Greeks saw their sole salvation in solidarity. The leader of this revived Panhellenism was Eumenes II of Pergamum, and his chief rival was Perseus, son of Philip V. The two men quarreled for leadership in the Greek world, with controversy centering principally about Rome. Eumenes, who had profited so handsomely from Rome's generosity after Magnesia and who feared his restless Asiatic subjects, wished to remain on good terms with Rome, and he even conceived a grand design for assuring Greek supremacy in the Near East with the aid of Roman arms. Perseus, on the other hand, having no oriental subjects to fear, planned a war of revenge against Rome. At first Eumenes had the larger following in Greece, but presently Perseus got the upper hand. Fearing lest Perseus antagonize Rome and thus spoil his grand design, Eumenes went to Rome and denounced his rival. The next year Rome declared war on Perseus (171).

**Macedonia
partitioned
(167)**

This third Macedonian War was won at the battle of Pydna. After abolishing the Macedonian monarchy, the Romans divided the country into four tiny republics, exacting an annual indemnity amounting to one-half the sum formerly paid the king in taxes (167). Eumenes had not intended that Perseus should be crushed so completely, for the fall of Macedonia was a loss to the military power of the whole Greek world, and in the last days of the war he had intrigued with Perseus against Rome. The Romans learned of his duplicity and withdrew their confidence, but they inflicted no further punishment upon him. A few other Greek states were punished for aiding Perseus, and a thousand Greek hostages were taken to Rome, but in general Rome stood by Flaminius's treaty. Once more all Roman troops were withdrawn after the war.

The Decline of the Greek East

**Last
efforts of
the Greeks**

From this time onward the decline of the Greeks was rapid, both in Europe and in the Hellenistic empires. The European Greeks were not so far spent, however, that they were willing to keep the peace. Outwardly they assumed the most slavish attitude toward Rome, thereby winning Roman contempt, but inwardly they were full of hatred. In the early days of the Third Punic War, when Roman arms were not prospering, an impostor named Andriseus appeared, claiming to be an illegitimate son of Perseus. Thousands of Macedonians flocked to his banner. Andriseus hoped to reestablish the Macedonian

monarchy, but he was quickly defeated and killed by the Romans (148). The four republics resumed their shadowy existence, but a Roman praetor was stationed in Macedonia to look after Roman interests there. Soon thereafter, when anti-Roman disturbances broke out in Corinth, a rather brutal general (Mummius) was sent to quell them. He destroyed the city (146), this atrocity coming only a few weeks after Scipio Aemilianus had destroyed Carthage. It gave an unpleasant foretaste of a new spirit that was arising in Rome, but for the moment no other untoward acts occurred. For more than fifty years little was heard from dying Greece.

The next phase of Rome's progress toward world empire was the most surprising and the most significant. The empires of the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, and Eumenes went to pieces rapidly after 167. This decline cannot be attributed to Rome, whose armies had not advanced east of the Aegean since the Magnesia campaign of 190-189 and whose statesmen and people showed little concern about what happened there. The decline of Greek power was due to the reviving strength of the Orientals, whose frequent rebellions tore the Hellenistic world to pieces. The Parthians had by this time seized everything east of the Euphrates, but even more disastrous were the bloody civil wars in Syria and Egypt, caused by oriental uprisings. Then Attalus III, son of Eumenes II, died (133) and it was found that by will he had left his Pergamene kingdom to the Roman people. The Romans, who had nothing to do with the making of this will, were quite surprised at the news. Yet Attalus's motives are clear. Like his father, he dreamed of securing Roman military aid to support the Greeks and their culture in the Orient, but unlike his father, he realized that the Romans would not continue forever to grant such aid out of sheer generosity and unselfish idealism. But if Rome annexed his kingdom, she might defend it out of self-interest. Attalus was not mistaken.

News of the will reached Rome at a time of great political turmoil, but the senate accepted the legacy at once. Within a short time, however, a major rebellion of Orientals broke out in Asia Minor, led by a certain Aristonicus. A Roman consul was killed while attempting to suppress the rebels, but at last the Romans won, and in 129 Eumenes' kingdom became the Roman province of Asia. As Attalus had foreseen, the Romans thereafter defended Greek supremacy over the Orientals in order to retain their own power. During the next hundred years other parts of the Near East were taken over in similar

**Pergamum
inherited
by Rome
(133)**

**Near East
in the
empire**

fashion, until the whole was in Roman hands. The Romans sometimes fought against Orientals, and against European Greeks, but after Magnesia they did not fight against Asiatic Greeks again until they fought Cleopatra at Actium (31 B.C.). These Asiatic Greeks entered the empire voluntarily, or perhaps they just fell into it; they were not conquered, or dragged in. The Roman emperors of the first and second centuries after Christ, acting much as Eumenes and Attalus had hoped they would, continued using Roman legions to defend Greek civilization against insurgent Orientals. Although Eumenes was a Greek, he and his son deserve a high place among the founders of the Roman Empire.

II. ROME AS AN IMPERIAL STATE

ROME's military victories brought in their wake a host of political, economic, and social problems. First of all, there was the matter of the reconstruction of Italy after Hannibal's invasion. For fifteen years he had wrought great havoc, boasting at the end that he had destroyed four hundred towns. The old men, women, and children kept agriculture going during the war, but they had neither the skill nor the physical strength to rebuild the destroyed farms and villages. Even after Hannibal had left Italy, reconstruction could not proceed rapidly, for thousands of men were soon called to the colors for the wars in Greece. Rural Italy lacked the man power to rebuild along the old lines. Reconstruction also required more financial capital than the peasants possessed, and thousands were forced to sell what was left of their farms and go off to join the landless poor in Rome. The Roman peasant who had conquered the world now sadly discovered that while doing so he had lost his farm and everything that he possessed.

Meantime other classes of society had been enriched by the wars. Some got their money by profiteering or by selling supplies to the army at exorbitant prices; others made fortunes from booty. The old families of the Roman aristocracy sometimes did very well by themselves, but Rome also acquired a large crop of new-rich upstarts. Men with new wealth to invest bought up the ruined farms of peasants at trifling prices, rebuilt them and restocked them, or turned them to new types of agriculture. Sometimes they set out vineyards and olive trees, and sometimes they turned the fields to pasture. Such

*Devastation
in rural
Italy*

*Slavery and
the new
agriculture*

agriculture required less labor, and, as much of the work could be done by slaves, slavery advanced rapidly in Italy. Some slaves were barbarians captured by professional slave catchers, but others had been taken as prisoners of war. Many a Roman veteran, starving in the slums of Rome, must have asked himself bitterly who had really won the wars. The slaves whom he had conquered, and who now lived on what had been his farm, at least had something to eat.

**Discontent
in Rome**

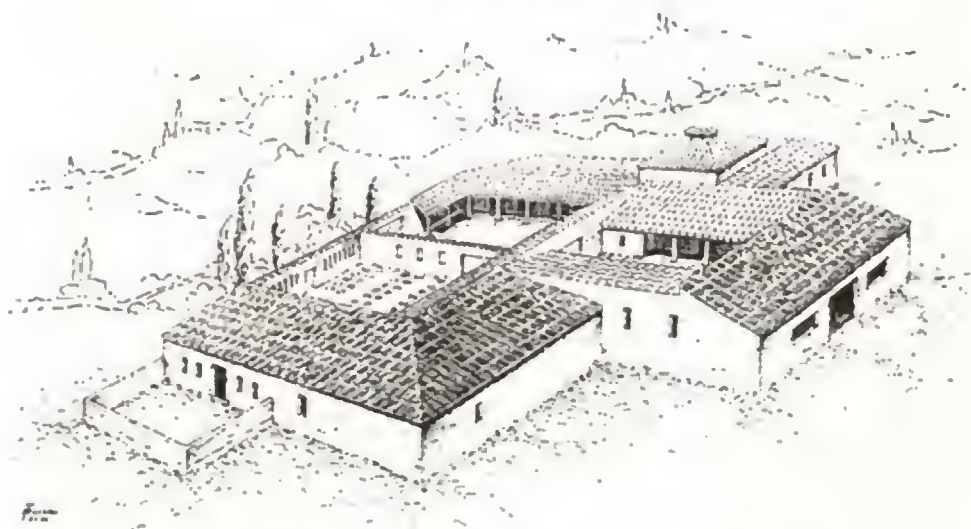
These conditions aroused great dissatisfaction at Rome in the post-war years. Clever politicians exploited the rising discontent to launch a terrific attack upon the war heroes, and in 184 Scipio's brother was convicted of embezzlement. Africanus followed him into exile, where he died a year later, grumbling about the ingratitude of republics. Meantime, however, the social tensions were being relieved by the migration of thousands of settlers to the Po Valley during the two decades between 190 and 170. This region was still called Cisalpine Gaul ("Gaul this side of the Alps"), but it was becoming thoroughly Romanized. Some modern writers suggest that its population today represents the old Italy better than does that of southern Italy, which, they say, is largely descended from the slaves of the old Romans.

**"Isolation-
ist" Rome**

The political agitation that culminated in the exile of the Scipios caused a great strengthening of "isolationism" among the Romans. The Scipios were inclined to strut around boasting that they, like Alexander, had conquered the world, and their friends sometimes favored new imperialistic adventures. The fall of the Scipios silenced such talk for many years. The opposing political party, formerly led by Fabius and friends who had taken prominent parts in the conquest of Italy and who were now satisfied with what they held, had long been hostile to overseas adventures. During the Second Punic War they would have been content with driving Hannibal out of Italy, and they opposed Scipio's invasion of Africa. The idealistic peace treaty made for Greece by Flaminius (a member of the Fabian faction) was designed as a permanent settlement of Greek affairs, in the hope that Rome would never again be called upon to intervene. Aemilius Paullus, the victor at Pydna, had opposed entering the war, though he was a relative of Scipio, and after he had won it he hoped that Rome could keep away from Greece thereafter. The most important of Rome's isolationists, however, was Marcus Porcius Cato (234-149).

**Cato
the Elder**

Born to a humble station in life, Cato owed his political career to the patronage of a patrician belonging to the Fabian faction. As a



ROMAN FARMHOUSE. A well-to-do form in the days of Cato, about 170 B.C. Built around central courts, the house was made of stuccoed wood or brick, with a tile roof. The owner, or more probably his bailiff, lived in the farthest section, beyond the great court. At the far corner was a large dining room, and sleeping rooms opened on the court. Next to them was the kitchen, whose high roof over the hearth had holes to let out the smoke. This kitchen was the center of family life, with the Lares and Penates in their traditional niches. Around the second court were the stables and sleeping rooms for the slaves. The third wing housed storerooms, workrooms, and wine and olive presses. The fence at the extreme left enclosed a threshing floor. The court adjoining the third wing was filled with large jars for storing wine and olive oil. (E. Brehaut, *Cato the Censor on Farming*, by permission of the Columbia University Press)

young man he had fought under Fabius; as quaestor in 204 he tried to block Scipio's embarkation for Africa; and he commanded troops in the war against Antiochus III. He then made himself leader in the attack upon the Scipios, and it was during his censorship that they were driven into exile. Though a well-educated man himself, and one of the founders of Latin literature, Cato was always hostile to Greeks and to Greek culture. He never tired of ridiculing the *Graeculi* ("Greeklings," silly Romans who were constantly aping the Greeks), and he resolutely opposed all intervention in Greek affairs. His rugged force of character, his patent honesty, his frugality, his biting wit and oratorical skill, all marked him as a true Roman of the old school. He was the most characteristic Roman of his day, admired as such by subsequent generations. But though Romans generally shared his views at the time, Cato fought a losing battle against imperialism. The world situation was dragging Rome into empire in spite of herself, and the most that Cato could accomplish was to keep her from

annexing lands east of the Adriatic and to make sure that the conquered Greeks were left free to govern themselves.

The New Rome

*The city in
the second
century*

Cato certainly was correct when he predicted that dire consequences would follow from the expansion of Roman power into the Greek East, but at the time of his death everything seemed rosy. As there had been no fighting in Italy during the Greek wars, Rome faced no serious problems of reconstruction afterward, and the middle years of the second century were a happy period to which later Romans



POMPEII: HOUSE OF THE SILVER WEDDING. Rich Romans in the second century before Christ probably had town houses much like this one in Pompeii. The large room in the center is the atrium. In early times it was the only room in the house, but when houses became more elaborate, the central hearth was moved to a kitchen in the rear. The atrium retained its open roof, however, and at its center was the *impluvium*, a large basin to catch rain water. Often it was beautified with statues and fountains. Back of the atrium a short hall led to a large flower garden court, called the *peristyle* because it was surrounded by pillars. There was also a vegetable garden outside the kitchen to the right, and to the left was a second flower garden, surrounded by an *orcode*. The dining room and other formal rooms opened off the atrium, with windows overlooking the gardens; the kitchen and the sleeping rooms were off the peristyle court. The slave quarters are visible at the rear. The whole edifice was about 60 feet wide by 150 feet long.

looked back with sadness and longing. They were a period of economic prosperity and cultural refinement. Rome was being embellished with temples and public buildings, making her a city fit to be the capital of the world; rich Romans built magnificent palaces for themselves; streets were paved; sewers were built; and fresh water was brought to the city by enormous aqueducts, the most famous of which, the Aqua Marcia (144), was sixty-two miles long. The forum remained the business center of the city, thronged with merchants and traders from every corner of the Mediterranean world. On its southern side rose the aristocratic residential section on the Palatine Hill. On the opposite side of the forum lay the slums, whose narrow and dirty streets were lined with huge jerry-built tenements, six or seven stories high, which were a public menace in time of fire or pestilence. Here dwelt thousands of Italian peasants who had been forced from their farms by the competition of slave labor, and here too dwelt the thousands of foreigners who flocked to Rome, bringing with them their strange manners, customs, costumes, and religions.

From early times the trade and industry of Rome had been conducted largely by non-Romans, especially by Etruscans and Greeks. Other national groups were now added. The true Romans, especially those of the middle and upper classes, remained fundamentally agrarian in spirit, and ordinarily they were glad to leave business negotiations to others. Nevertheless, they showed no distaste for the profits accruing from trade. Sometimes rich Romans would set up former slaves in business and pocket a lion's share of the profits: sometimes they would organize joint-stock companies whose shares they owned, while the management of affairs was left to others. Wealthy Romans not belonging to the senatorial aristocracy, called "equestrians" (*equites*), prospered greatly in this second century and, before the century was out, they were demanding a greater voice in the government than the old aristocrats were willing to grant.

The senatorial aristocracy presided with intelligence and dignity over this new cosmopolitan Rome. The quarrels between Fabians and Scipios were by this time forgotten, and their reconciliation was publicized when Aemilius Paullus, the victor at Pydna, allowed one of his sons to be adopted by the son of Scipio Africanus, another by the grandson of Fabius, while his daughter married the son of Cato! The first of these sons, Scipio Aemilianus, commanded the armies that destroyed Carthage in 146 (though he had opposed the war in the first place, and later regretted the destruction of the city), and thereafter

**Trade
and the
equestrians**

**The
senatorial
aristocracy**

until his death in 129 he was the leading man in Rome. Enlightened, well educated in Latin and Greek, a patron of literature and the arts, traveled and urbane, and yet thoroughly Roman, he was the center of a coterie of statesmen, philosophers, and literary men, of whom Cicero wrote admiringly in the next century, calling them the "Scipionic circle."

*Its rigor
moris*

It must be added, however, that this senatorial aristocracy was daily becoming more exclusive. In the old days it had been possible for a plebeian of ability to force his way into the governing class and become a member of the lesser nobility. After Hannibal, admission even to this second-class nobility became virtually impossible. A few "new men" reached high office in the 170's, and others, such as Cato, were successful because of powerful patrons, but in general the charmed circle of the aristocracy refused to admit new members. Leaders dealt out consulships and commands to members of their own order and ignored the abilities of others. As we look back at this pleasant period of the Republic, we see that its aristocracy could no longer adapt itself easily to new conditions and that *rigor moris* was already setting in.

The Profit and Loss of Empire

*Provincial
administra-
tion*

Rome's conquests during the Punic Wars forced her to find ways to govern her provinces. There had been no such problem after the conquest of Italy, for the old governments went right on functioning as before. In Sicily, Sardinia, and Spain, however, such a policy was impossible; the old governments had ceased to exist. Carthaginian governors had ruled these territories, and after their expulsion no one remained to administer the province. The Romans therefore had to set up new governments. After several years of indecision they began, in 227, to elect two extra praetors annually, sending them to govern Sicily and Sardinia-Corsica; after 198 two more were added, to rule eastern and southern Spain. At first these governors changed the old system very little, allowing their governments to run in the old grooves as much as possible. Old customs, laws, and religions were left unmolested, and taxes were collected in the same manner and to the same amount as before. In these early days the Roman praetors merely maintained order, presided over courts, and (especially in Spain) defended the provinces against outside attack. Local affairs were scarcely touched.

Carthage had made a great profit from her empire and Rome therefore found a surplus in the treasury after paying the costs of provincial administration. This surplus went to Rome. Sicily sent great quantities of grain, Spain sent silver from her mines. As the praetors had no adequate staff for collecting the grain or operating the mines, they assigned these tasks to "publicans"—private citizens who contracted to do the work for a fee. Eventually the publicans became infamous because of their dishonesty and heartlessness, but at first there was little complaint: probably taxes were collected more honestly and more humanely than under the Punic regime. On the other hand, the steady flow of tribute into the Roman treasury, especially after the tribute of Macedonia was added to that from the islands and Spain, gave the Roman government an income large enough to defray its ordinary costs. After 167, Roman citizens paid no direct taxes.

*Revenue
from the
empire*

Even in these early days, however, the corrupting influence of imperialism was beginning to make itself felt at Rome. In the old days the aristocracy had maintained exceptionally high standards of honesty, and visitors from Greece (where politicians were incredibly corrupt) expressed amazement at the way Romans would entrust generals with huge sums of money for which they required no detailed accounting after the war. With this austere honest leadership, Roman soldiers usually behaved themselves, and the Greeks were pleasantly surprised at the small amount of looting during the war against Philip V. These idyllic conditions soon began to change, however, and during the war against Perseus there was much complaint of disorderliness. Scenes at the sack of Corinth, twenty years later, almost pass belief, with the Roman general giving his soldiers the worst possible example.

*Corruption
of Rome*

Moreover, the government of the provinces offered unprecedented opportunities for graft. Taxes had to be collected, roads and fortifications built, and money spent in countless ways. These things were done honestly at Rome, where officials were under the eye of every citizen, but in Sardinia or Spain there were few to see what went on, and as the money came from conquered natives anyhow, people at Rome were less inclined to object to a little graft. The pre-Roman governors of these provinces had usually been corrupt, and natives had learned how to secure their favor with bribes. The natives now assumed that their new governors would be equally susceptible to bribery, and often the Roman was unable to resist their blandishments. It must be said, however, that though the standards of the aris-

*Bribery
and graft*

tocratic governors declined, these men were still restrained by ancient family pride. The publicans, on the other hand, inherited no such scruples, and their greed quickly got the better of their honesty. The best that can be said of them is that it took them a hundred years to learn how far they could go. Even in the second century, however, bribery, graft, embezzlement, and extortion were frequent occurrences in the western provinces.

**The army
demoralized**

This decline in the standards of honesty had deplorable consequences in demoralizing the army. When commanders and officers showed themselves interested primarily in loot, soldiers quickly followed their example, and presently they showed the greatest disinclination for anything else. An investigation in Spain showed that army camps there were filled with traders buying and selling plunder, and with bootleggers, prostitutes, and other riffraff everywhere. It was said that even private soldiers owned slaves who did their work, and that sometimes instead of marching they had themselves carried in litters by their slaves. On one occasion twenty thousand of these heroes surrendered to four thousand Spaniards—probably the most disgraceful surrender in Rome's military annals.

**Rome's
allies
mistreated**

Rome's attitude toward her Italian allies also began to change in the second century. For many years she had treated these allies fairly, and she had been rewarded with their loyalty in the days of Hannibal. Fifty years later, however, Roman generals and magistrates sometimes treated Italians as they had learned to treat the conquered peoples of Sardinia and Spain. Allied soldiers no longer received equal treatment with Romans, either in the services required of them, or in punishment for breaches of discipline, or in the distribution of booty. The allies got very little, either in the way of revenue or of graft, from the provinces which they had helped to conquer. The more intelligent Romans, such as Cato and Aemilianus, knew how essential the allies were to the army, and wished to treat them fairly, but it was difficult to maintain the old standards in the new day.

**Extension
of slavery**

Perhaps the most fateful development of all was the rapid extension of slavery. There had always been slaves in Italy, as in the rest of the ancient world, but they were not numerous enough to be a major factor in the economy, and in the early years of the Republic various laws attempted to alleviate the evil. After the First Punic War large numbers of Sardinians were put on the market, and during the next century hundreds of thousands of slaves were brought to Italy from all parts of the Mediterranean world. They drove the free

Italian peasantry from the countryside and brought untold suffering to Italy, but this was not the sole disaster that resulted from their coming. The first recorded slave revolt, in 136, was not an important affair, but more serious rebellions between 135 and 73 B.C. inflicted great damage upon Italy.

In the long run these slaves had an equally deplorable effect upon the political life of Italy. As it always was difficult to make slaves work, owners frequently provided them with an incentive by promising them freedom (which included Roman citizenship) after a certain period of faithful service. Before the end of the second century, Rome was full of freedmen who voted and enjoyed the other rights of Roman citizenship. These new voters were often filled with class hatred for their former aristocratic owners, and they had little sympathy with Rome's political traditions. On the contrary, they brought to Rome the political turbulence that characterized the Hellenistic East, and their riots were such as Rome had not known since the early days of the Republic. As early as 130 Aemilianus felt called upon to remind such rioters that they were only the "step-children of Italy."

Freedmen

The most portentous by-product of slavery for the political life of Rome was the consequent decline of clientage. We have seen how the Roman aristocrats controlled elections through the votes of their clients. Every slave that was brought to Italy replaced a free peasant and thereby robbed some aristocrat of a client and a voter. Some clients went to Rome, where they no longer received benefits from their patrons and therefore failed to vote as he suggested; others migrated to Cisalpine Gaul, or later to Transalpine Gaul and Spain, where voting was impossible. The substitution of slaves for clients thus undermined the political bastions of the Roman aristocracy and of the whole Roman political system.

**Decline of
clientage**

In the period after the destruction of Carthage political leaders began frantically seeking new ways to hold their old clients and to attract others. Sometimes they resorted to bald bribery. As election even to minor offices usually led to subsequent appointments in the provinces, where such marvelous opportunities for graft prevailed, an ambitious and unscrupulous man could afford to spend lavishly to get himself elected: he would quickly get back his expenditures several times over. Others bribed voters in subtler ways, and later sent the bill to the treasury. Demagogues promised their followers sun, moon, and stars—all at government expense, of course. Others

**Political
disintegration**

built up political machines by finding lucrative posts in the provinces for their followers, and still others exploited the loyalty of veterans who had served under them. The activities of these politicians shook the Republic to its foundations and led, in the first century, to the Civil Wars that destroyed it.

THE DECLINE OF THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

**Tiberius
Gracchus**

Historians often date the decline of the Roman Republic from the tribuneship of Tiberius Gracchus in 133 B.C. Gracchus's mother was the daughter of Scipio Africanus; his father, a leading statesman during the 170's and 160's, belonged to a prominent family of the plebeian nobility; his sister married Scipio Aemilianus; and he himself married the daughter of Appius Claudius, head of a powerful patrician family. He therefore belonged to the inner circle of Roman politics. Being of a highly idealistic nature, he was much distressed at the thought of free Roman peasants being driven from their farms by foreign slaves, and, with the aid of Claudian relatives, he drew up a law designed to get them back on the land by giving them small lots of the public domain. Part of this land had been acquired by the Roman state during the conquest of Italy, other parts in the years after Hannibal, but it had been leased on easy terms to Roman aristocrats. Gracchus proposed to cancel these leases and distribute the land among the Roman poor.

**His
land law**

Tiberius Gracchus was only thirty years old when he was elected tribune for 133. He immediately presented his land law to the assembly, but aristocratic opposition forced him from one extreme step to another, even including the deposition of an opposing tribune. When the law was finally passed and a commission appointed to distribute the lands, the year was so nearly over that Gracchus, fearing lest his work be undone as soon as he was out of office, decided to run for a second tribuneship. This step was contrary to precedent if not to law. Exasperated senators caused a riot on election day and Gracchus was killed, along with about three hundred followers.

**Rising
dema-
goguary**

There can be little doubt of Gracchus's own candor and idealism, but his father-in-law, Appius Claudius, and other political associates were practical men interested principally in votes. Gracchus's momentary success made evident the collapse of the old system and showed that a candidate with a popular program could be elected to office in spite of senatorial opposition. During the next several years dema-

gogues therefore kept all Rome in turmoil. At this time, too, the sudden death of Scipio Aemilianus (129) left the high aristocracy without a competent leader. At the height of this confusion, Gaius Gracchus, the younger brother of Tiberius, was elected tribune for 123.

**Gaius
Gracchus**

Gaius Gracchus was only twenty years old when his brother was murdered, and he never forgot that bloody day. He swore vengeance against the entire senatorial order, exclaiming, "Those worst of men have murdered the best of men, my brother!" He was more of a practical politician than Tiberius, and he tried to attract as many persons as possible to his anti-senatorial faction. He therefore prepared a broad program of reform and proposed at least fifteen major laws, most of which were actually enacted. Some of these laws favored the poor whom his brother had befriended. He reenacted the old land law; when a famine in Africa forced the price of grain to unprecedented heights, he arranged to have the government sell grain to the poor at a reduced price; he developed a program of roads and other public works to give employment. Other laws were designed to attract wealthy equestrians. They were given the right to sit on the juries that tried senators; they were allowed to collect taxes in the provinces; it was even proposed that they be given representation in the senate. Another law proposed extending Roman citizenship to all Italians: as voting took place only at Rome, this law would benefit only those Italians who lived in or near the city, but presumably these few would show their gratitude to Gracchus. Gaius also secured laws ordering the establishment of new colonies, notably one in Africa near the site of ancient Carthage.

Gaius Gracchus held a second tribuneship in 122 (the reelection of tribunes had been legalized in 127), but he was defeated for a third term. As soon as he was out of office his opponents began repealing his laws, beginning with the colonial law. Again rioting broke out, and when Gaius's followers entrenched themselves on the Aventine hill, the consul ordered troops to disperse them. Some two thousand persons were killed, and Gaius was among the dead (121).

His death

The senatorial aristocrats could kill the Gracchi and their followers but they could not regain their old supremacy thereby. Perhaps it might be said that the real victor in the attack upon Gaius Gracchus, insofar as anyone was victor, was one of the plebeian nobility, Quintus Caecilius Metellus (201-115). Like the Gracchi, Metellus was hostile to the Scipios, and his following contained many equestrians and other businessmen. He also disapproved of the Gracchi and, though

Metellus

eighty years old, he participated personally in the final attack upon Gaius Gracchus. His family then became recognized leaders of the equestrian critics of the aristocracy. No less than eight of his sons, sons-in-law, and nephews were elected consuls between 123 and 109, and for half a century they dominated Rome. They became so powerful and wealthy that they could even deign to allow their lesser daughters to marry Scipios and Claudii.

*Years of
flamboyant
frivolity*

The early years of Metellan leadership were a prosperous period at Rome. The Gracchan reforms showed good effects, the return of domestic peace was even more beneficial, and in 120 Rome annexed southern Gaul. Thousands of Roman settlers found homes there, or farther west in Spain, thus relieving the conditions that had so distressed Tiberius Gracchus. Other aspects of the period were not so pleasing. The newly rich equestrians began flaunting their wealth in unseemly ways, and discouraged aristocrats flamboyantly dissipated what remained of their fortunes in a vain effort to keep ahead of their upstart rivals. Confidence in the ruling classes was shaken by repeated scandals involving the high aristocracy, and one foreign visitor remarked that the city itself was for sale if only a buyer appeared. The weakness of the whole system was made luridly clear by the career of Marius.

Marius and Sulla

*Gaius
Marius*

Gaius Marius was born to humble parents in 157. Though once a henchman to the Metelli, who got him elected to various minor offices, he presently broke with his patrons. Soon thereafter Rome went to war with Jugurtha, a native leader in northern Africa, and the Metellus who commanded the Roman armies made little progress. Manus criticized him severely and, with the aid of disgruntled equestrians, was elected consul for 107. Taking over Metellus's command, he presently defeated and captured Jugurtha. Marius was the ablest general of his generation, and his success was due primarily to his new model army. In place of the old citizen army he organized an army of well-trained professionals. Recruited on a volunteer basis, these soldiers were attracted by his promise that he would look after them, even after the war. At bottom, therefore, their loyalty went to Marius rather than to Rome. This dangerous precedent became a disaster for the Republic. Thereafter Roman politicians found soldiers useful as a political clientele, and in order to have soldiers, they began

looking for wars. Isolationist Rome gradually became recklessly aggressive.

Before Marius had completed the pacification of Africa, the Roman colonies in Gaul were attacked by invaders from the north known as Cinbri and Tentons. Roman armies were disastrously defeated and panicky Romans demanded that Marius be sent to save Gaul. They therefore elected him to a second consulship (104), though legally he could not stand again until ten years after his first term. When he failed to finish the war in that year, Marius ran for a third consulship. In this manner he held office for five consecutive terms (104-100). Though the last enemy forces were destroyed in 101, Marius insisted upon one more consulship in order to have time to make ample provision for his veterans. By this time he had entered into an alliance with a popular agitator, Saturninus, who had kept Rome in an uproar ever since 103. This man claimed to be continuing the program of Tiberius Gracchus: in reality, he was an unscrupulous demagogue. At the end of 100 Saturninus was killed in an election day riot and Marius withdrew into temporary exile.

*His six
consulships*

The departure of Marius brought a brief lull to the turmoil at Rome, but new troubles soon began disturbing the Roman state. The position of the Italian allies was rapidly deteriorating, in spite of the attempts of Marius and others to remedy matters. At last, in 90, the allies set up an independent state, "Italia," after severing all connection with Rome. Two years of fighting followed, and in the end Roman arms prevailed. Rome's victory was due in large part, however, to the fact that she promised Roman citizenship to all rebels who laid down their arms. This measure added 400,000 names to the citizen rolls, almost doubling the former number, but as voting still took place only at Rome, most Italians were effectively disfranchised. They remained sullen and discontented. Moreover, the fighting had caused great damage throughout Italy, and Rome was full of displaced persons. Marius, who had returned from his self-imposed exile in time to take a minor part in the war, then undertook to improve his political position by appealing to these malcontents. The senate had by this time learned to fight fire with fire, however, which gave a new form to the political struggle at Rome.

*Revolt of
the Italian
allies
(90-88)*

The senate's new champion was Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138-78), a successful general from an obscure branch of a great patrician family. Much distressed at the progress of a social upstart like Marius, Sulla devoted himself to the senatorial cause with such zeal that he

*Lucius
Sulla*

was allowed to marry a Metella and became consul in 88. At this juncture Mithridates (132–63), the oriental king of Pontus in Asia Minor and an ally of the Parthians, launched a war against Rome. It was necessary to send armies to the East at once, and leaders at Rome quarreled bitterly over the command. Sulla was given the appointment, but as soon as he was out of the city his enemies transferred it to Marius. Refusing to acquiesce, Sulla marched on the city with his troops and Marius fled to Africa. Sulla proceeded to Greece and Asia Minor, won a few minor victories, looted systematically, and gave Mithridates peace terms that left his power unimpaired.

Dictator

During Sulla's absence Marius returned to Rome and was elected to a seventh consulship (86), but two weeks after entering office the old man died. His friends then governed the city in a high-handed fashion, executing several senatorial leaders. After careful preparations, Sulla returned to Italy with his army and again marched on Rome. He took the city after severe fighting, had himself proclaimed dictator (82), and punished his enemies with the utmost ferocity. He published long lists of "proscribed" persons who were to be executed and whose property was to be confiscated, after which he introduced various constitutional changes designed to strengthen the political power of the senatorial class. He laid down his dictatorship in 79, probably because the Metelli had withdrawn their support, and a year later he died. In later times Sulla was pictured as the cruelest and most bloodthirsty of Romans.

Pandemonium

Sulla's failure

Sulla's reforms shored up the tottering Roman aristocracy only for a moment. In fact, the dictator was scarcely dead when an unsuccessful revolt broke out. One of the greatest weaknesses of his system was that he left no competent successors, and until a new group of leaders arose, the government of Rome merely drifted. A group of rather young men took charge of Rome about 70, however, and they remained in power for a quarter of a century.

New leaders after 70 B.C.

First among these new leaders may be mentioned Gnaeus Pompey (106–48) and Marcus Crassus (114–53). Each had joined Sulla soon after his return to Italy, and each had enriched himself by seizing the properties of his enemies. Crassus was essentially a businessman and banker, closely associated with the big business of his day, but

thirsty for power and glory. Pompey, on the other hand, was an able general with vast political ambitions. A few years younger than they was Julius Caesar (100–44), an aristocrat related by marriage to Marius and his confederates. Marcus Cicero (106–43) was still another of the group, a member of the equestrian class, well educated, Rome's greatest orator, and an honest man (which was something in those days); but he had no clientele, either of old-fashioned clients, or of soldiers, or of businessmen, or of other hangers-on, and his political ambitions led to pathetic tragedy. Marcus Cato (95–46), a descendant of the old censor, became the recognized leader of the conservative aristocrats; he was high-minded and courageous but politically inept and wholly out of touch with the new day.

Pompey and Crassus had been rivals for Sulla's favor in their youth; they quarreled incessantly during their consulship in 70; and for many years their fear and hatred of each other distracted Rome. After Crassus completed his consulship he returned to his business activities, but Pompey could find no such refuge. He had held the highest political office, but he could scarcely retire when not quite thirty-seven years old. In looking around for something glorious to do, his eye fell on Asia Minor, where a new war with Mithridates had been dragging along rather unsuccessfully for several years. At last, in 66, the senate was persuaded to assign this command to Pompey, who spent five years conquering the East.

Pompey

Crassus was terrified at the news of Pompey's appointment and especially at the prospect of the general's returning to Italy, like Sulla, at the head of an army. In his nightmares Crassus saw his own name heading Pompey's proscription lists. He therefore entered into a political alliance with young Julius Caesar and began seeking excuses for raising an army with which to resist Pompey. He and his agents kept Rome in a turmoil with demagogic proposals, until the terrified aristocrats elected Cicero consul for 63. Before the end of that year Mithridates was dead and it was certain that Pompey would soon return to Rome. As Crassus and Caesar still had no army, and saw no immediate hope of getting one, Caesar persuaded Crassus to change his tactics and seek Pompey's friendship. Unfortunately, however, one of Crassus's lieutenants, a decadent aristocrat named Lucius Catiline (c. 108–62) refused to accept the new policy and began plotting an armed rebellion late in 63. Cicero easily foiled the plotters; Catiline and his accomplices were killed; and Cicero spent the rest of his life talking about how he had saved Rome. A year later Pompey

**Catiline's
conspiracy**

landed in Italy and, to the relief of many, he discharged his soldiers at once.

**The First
Triumvirate
(59-53)**

The next two or three years were a period of high excitement. Popular leaders accused Cicero of using illegal methods against Catiline and eventually had him exiled for several months. Cato blocked all Pompey's efforts to get bonuses for his veterans. Social scandals and lurid political trials rocked the city. At last, in 60, Caesar brought his two friends together in an informal secret coalition now known as the First Triumvirate. Each of the three members got exactly what he wanted by joining the Triumvirate: Pompey got his bonuses and ratification of his settlement of the East; Crassus got aid in various business undertakings; and Caesar was elected consul for 59 and became proconsul (ex-consul serving as provincial governor) in Gaul a year later. The Triumvirate was cemented when Pompey married Caesar's daughter—though he was six years older than his new father-in-law and had recently named Caesar corespondent when divorcing his third wife.

**Lawlessness
at Rome**

The political life of Rome during the next ten years has aptly been compared to a witches' Sabbath. On the very first day of Caesar's consulship, some of Pompey's veterans attacked his colleague (Bibulus) and so scared the poor man that he dared not leave his house thereafter: Caesar virtually became sole consul. He spent the next eight years conquering Gaul as far as the Rhine and the English Channel, securing an army of ten legions absolutely devoted to himself, and making great propaganda at Rome with his grandiose accounts of his accomplishments. Crassus and Pompey began using armed gangs of slaves and gladiators against each other, and they so terrorized the city that no prominent politician dared go on the streets without a bodyguard. When Cato once had the courage to criticize Caesar in the senate, he was beaten within an inch of his life by hoodlums. On more than one occasion gangsters prevented an election by driving voters from the polls. When the two gangs fought a pitched battle in the streets of Rome, and Crassus's commander was killed (52), his followers carried his body in state to the forum, where they celebrated a terrifying wake and burned down the senate house as a funeral pyre for their hero.

**Collapse
of the
Triumvirate**

Meantime the price of grain at Rome had risen to unusual heights. Pompey publicly attributed the misfortune to Crassus's financial machinations and got himself named relief administrator—with enormous opportunities for political skulduggery and graft. Being

worried about Caesar's growing reputation and his army, Pompey next persuaded the senate to put him in command of six legions in Spain, but as he was unwilling to give up the relief racket, he illegally sent his son to command the troops. Not to be outdone by his two allies, Crassus secured command of troops in Syria, where he foolishly embarked upon a campaign against the Parthians. He was defeated and killed (53). Caesar's daughter had recently died (54), severing the last bond tying him to Pompey, and the Triumvirate thus came to an inglorious end.

Civil War

Civil war between Caesar and Pompey thus became virtually inevitable. The aristocracy and the upper classes hoped that the two men would exterminate each other, but they supported Pompey, expecting to destroy him after he had eliminated Caesar; the populace, on the other hand, preferred to back Caesar. During the years 51 and 50, the two generals were maneuvering politically, each trying to make the other seem an aggressor, and at last, early in 49, a Caesarean tribune (Mark Antony) forced Pompey into an illegal action. On January 11 Caesar crossed the Rubicon (a small stream marking the boundary between Cisalpine Gaul and Italy) and marched on Rome, announcing that he would free the city from the tyrant who was planning to overthrow the constitution. Pompey proclaimed Caesar an outlaw.

**Caesar at
the Rubicon**

The ensuing battles need not detain us. Within two months Caesar had occupied all Italy and Pompey was a fugitive in Greece. Caesar then turned to Spain, where he defeated Pompey's son. In the summer of 48 he advanced into Greece and defeated Pompey at Pharsalus, after which Pompey fled to Egypt and was murdered there. Caesar pursued him slowly, punished his murderers, and restored the queen, Cleopatra, to the throne from which her brother had recently expelled her. Returning to Rome through Asia Minor, he defeated the son of Mithridates at Zela, announcing his victory in the famous words, *Veni, vidi, vici* ("I came, I saw, I conquered"). Meantime Cato and others had recruited armies in Africa, where Caesar destroyed them early in 46, and after his defeat Cato committed suicide, saying that he did not care to survive liberty. The year 45 saw a second victory in Spain, after which no military force in the Roman Empire could withstand Caesar.

**Caesar's
victories**

*The Ides
of March,
44 B.C.*

Nevertheless, Caesar was not loved by the Roman aristocrats, and no settlement was possible at the moment. He had been named dictator by a subservient senate, but he introduced no important changes in government. Instead he planned a war against Parthia, hoping that victory would stimulate enough enthusiasm to bring forgetfulness of the past. On the very day that he proposed to declare war, however, he was murdered by a small group of aristocrats led by Brutus and Cassius (the "Ides of March," i.e., March 15, 44 B.C.).

*Mark
Antony
in control*

The conspirators had made no plans for governing Rome and the world after Caesar's death, and they showed their fatuous incompetence by doing nothing but orate on liberty. Meantime the government of Rome fell to more resolute persons. At the time of his death, Caesar was serving his fifth consulship, having as colleague Mark Antony (83-30). Antony continued in office, of course, and quickly seized Caesar's war chest and papers. That night Rome was occupied by troops devoted to Caesar, and within a short time most of the conspirators had fled from the city they had "liberated." Early in the summer of 44 the situation was complicated by the arrival in Rome of Gaius Octavius (63 B.C.-A.D. 14), later Octavian, and finally known as Augustus. Being Caesar's great-nephew, he had been named as Caesar's heir in his will. Though only eighteen years old, Octavian received the advice and aid of many of Caesar's friends, and soon he became a major factor in politics.

*The Second
Triumvirate*

After various conflicts, which may be called a new civil war, Mark Antony, Marcus Lepidus, and Octavian united their forces and formed the Second Triumvirate. They immediately proscribed many of their enemies, including Cicero, and they destroyed the armies of Brutus and Cassius at Philippi in Thrace (42). After this victory, and the suicide of the "liberators," Antony proceeded eastward, Octavian returned to settle matters in Italy, and Lepidus was sent off to Africa. Octavian was rather successful in Italy, and presently eliminated Lepidus as a power in the Triumvirate. Antony, on the other hand, was badly defeated by the Parthians (36) and became entangled with Cleopatra, who inflated him with her own vast dreams of empire. When Antony and Cleopatra advanced to the conquest of the West, their forces met Octavian's near Actium, on the western coast of Greece, and there they were decisively defeated (September, 31). A year later Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide in Egypt, leaving Octavian sole ruler of the civilized world.

THE ROMAN REVOLUTION

Any summary of the political events of the last century of the Roman Republic must perforce give a rather superficial picture of what was going on. The politicians who strutted across the stage may have thought they were directing the course of events, but really they were carried along by forces which they could neither master nor comprehend. Like leaves floating down a river, they showed the direction of the current, but they did not determine it. At bottom, the story of these years tells how a small city-state found itself unable to govern a world empire and at last was overwhelmed by a fundamental revolution.

**Rome's
funda-
mental
revolution**

This revolution was partly political, partly economic, partly intellectual, and it was so far-reaching that the Rome of Actium can scarcely be recognized as the daughter of the Rome of Scipio Aemilianus, still less as the granddaughter of the Rome of Scipio Africanus or Fabius. The old Rome had been an aristocratic republic, well organized and functioning smoothly. Now the old aristocracy was financially bankrupt and had lost the voters who had subserviently elected its members to office year after year. After Tiberius Gracchus these old aristocrats could no longer control Rome, and eventually they became extinct. Some were murdered in the days of Marius and Sulla, others lost their lives during the Civil Wars, hundreds were executed by the Second Triumvirate, others were killed or committed suicide after the battle of Philippi. Those who escaped with their lives were powerless, and their families died out ingloriously within a century after Actium. The passing of this aristocracy entailed the passing of the old Rome and made way for a new Rome which was ruled by new men in a new manner.

**Passing
of the old
aristocracy**

The old Rome had been an agricultural community, with trade left largely to Etruscans, Italians, or Greeks from southern Italy. These traders profited greatly from Rome's wars in the early decades of the second century, and when they were granted Roman citizenship in 212 B.C., some of them became important behind the scenes in Roman politics. They were even more important in Rome's economic life and, advancing hand in hand with the generals, they made Rome the economic capital of the Mediterranean world. Commerce and finance replaced agriculture in the new Rome, and even agriculture became highly capitalistic: the new Italy was divided into great estates,

**Commerce
and finance
supreme**



UNKNOWN ROMAN (Late Republican Period). (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)

owned by absentee landlords and worked by gangs of slaves. The successful politicians of the new day were those who coöperated best with the financial interests.

**Rome's new
imperialism**

The old Rome had not been imperialistically aggressive, but after Marius and Sulla Roman generals were ever on the lookout for new wars. Sometimes they fought for booty or glory, but in the days of the First Triumvirate they fought primarily in order to acquire armies

THE ROMAN EMPIRE AT THE DEATH OF AUGUSTUS 14 A.D.

- Imperial Provinces
- Senatorial Provinces
- Client Kingdoms
- Added by Augustus



KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

- PA - Pennine Alps
- CA - Cottian Alps
- MA - Maritime Alps

of soldiers who would support their political careers. We must bear in mind, however, that Rome's military conquests were not due to her generals or her people, but to the world situation. Africanus or Aemilianus could never have conquered what Caesar and Pompey added to the empire. When Rome began her career of conquest, in the third century, the eastern Mediterranean world was dominated by three powerful Greek empires. During the next hundred years, one (Macedon) was destroyed by Rome but the other two (Syria and Egypt) were reduced to impotence by the repeated revolts of their oriental subjects. At the beginning of the first century there was a power vacuum in the Near East. The only question was whether this region should fall to Rome or to such Orientals as Mithridates and the Parthians. The Greeks, who could no longer rule these lands, preferred Roman to oriental rule and handed their countries over to Rome. Rome was thus sucked into the vacuum, willy-nilly, without much serious fighting. Likewise Caesar's successes in Gaul were due in large part to the collapse of a powerful state that had ruled there in the second century, and to the fact that most Gauls now preferred Roman rulers to Germans. Rome had little to do with the revolutionary forces which destroyed her imperialistic predecessors in both East and West.

**Caesar's
complex
character**

Caesar's complex character has always been an enigma to historians. Immediately after his death, Octavian and others began building up his reputation to heroic proportions, and from that day to this Caesar worshipers have proclaimed him the greatest man that ever lived. Others have pictured him as a mere destroyer. Obviously the truth lies somewhere between these extremes. There can be little doubt of his high military talents. He knew how to inspire his followers, and he was quick to forgive his enemies. He was heartlessly brutal to Gauls and Germans, but in general the provincials supported him because they regarded Pompey and Cato as typical of the aristocrats who had plundered their provinces so ruthlessly and so often. What Caesar wanted was power and a brilliant political career. To gain these ends he was prepared to go to any lengths, just as Pompey and Cato were prepared to go to equal lengths to stop him. Pompey and Cato had already shown their incapacity to rule Rome during the 50's, and there is no reason to suppose that Caesar would have succeeded better had his life been spared. The good things that came from the Roman Revolution came in spite of Caesar rather than because of him.

The greatest benefit that men derived from the Revolution was that Rome ceased being a city-state, ruling and plundering the world, and became the capital of a world empire. The wars that had distressed the world ever since Alexander now gave way to the Roman peace. The looting of provinces was gradually brought under control, and provincials came to feel themselves good Romans. Pompey, Caesar, and Antony were very liberal in conferring the rights of Roman citizenship upon their friends in the provinces, and soon the men thus honored were the local leaders, binding their cities to Rome by bonds of self-interest. By liquidating the moribund aristocracies everywhere, the Revolution opened the way for new men, both at Rome and in the provinces. The Revolution made possible a "career open to talent." The old Roman skill at uniting peoples of many races and cultures reappeared and Rome again boasted that she could make anyone a good Roman citizen.

**Benefits
brought
by the
Revolution**

THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The Civil Wars ended with the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. Octavian slowly proceeded to Egypt, which he occupied without opposition and annexed to Rome, and then returned home early in 29. Two years later he promulgated laws regularizing his position and completing the transition from the Republic to the Empire. He thereby inaugurated the third great period in Roman history: the first had been the Kingdom, from early times to 509; the second was the Republic, from 509 to 27; and the Empire lasted from 27 B.C. until the end of the ancient world.

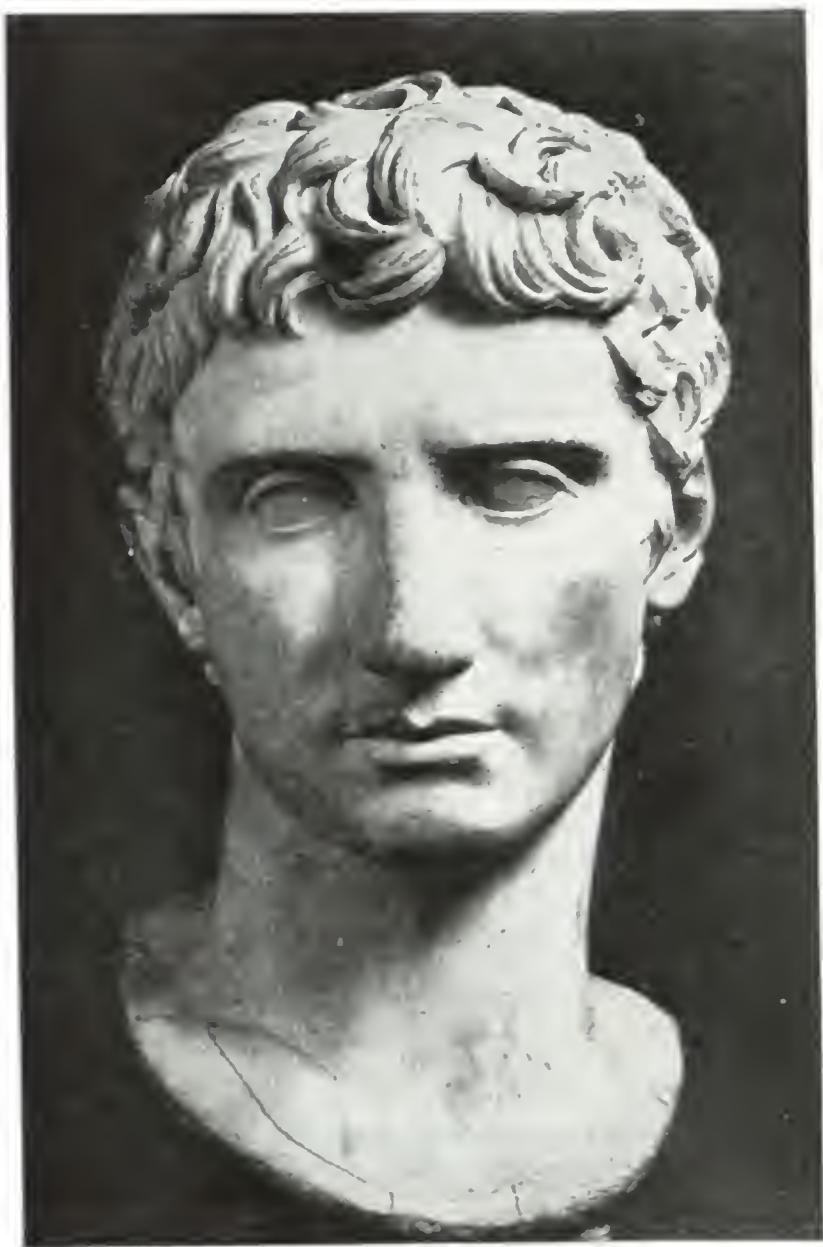
**The end
of the
Republic**

Octavian was a shrewd and cautious man who never forgot that his great-uncle, Julius Caesar, had been murdered because his enemies suspected him of planning to set up a tyranny. He therefore carefully avoided all semblance of innovation. In 27 B.C. he merely announced that, as the wars were over, he was laying down all the war powers that had been granted him, returning the government to the senate and people, and "restoring" the Republic. Thereafter his power rested upon a new interpretation of a few traditional institutions of the old Republic.

Octavian

In 27 Octavian was serving his seventh term as consul, and he continued to be elected annually until 23; two further terms raised the total to thirteen. Ever since Sulla, however, consuls had regularly become "proconsuls" the next year, with power to command troops and govern provinces. Octavian was only a proconsul after 23, but he

**The basis
of his
power**



AUGUSTUS. (*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

so arranged matters that he ruled all the provinces in which it was necessary to station large bodies of troops: the other provinces were governed as before by appointees of the senate. It thus came about that Octavian commanded all the troops in the empire. In the second place, Octavian was granted the *tribunicia potestas*, or "power of the tribune." Being a patrician, he could not legally hold the office itself, but by special act of the senate he received all its powers. As these powers included the right to veto legislation, and to propose new laws, the legislative power was virtually transferred to him.

A third slight change concerned finances. The old treasury was left untouched, but the costs of government had risen so enormously that the old revenues were no longer adequate. Octavian therefore established a new treasury, not controlled by the senate, whose revenues came from his provinces and whose funds he used as he saw fit—chiefly for paying his troops, who were thereby removed from senatorial control. When even these revenues were not enough, Octavian contributed heavily from his own purse. He was by far the richest man in the world, with vast properties in every part of the Empire: when the revenue from these estates was regularly used for public purposes, they virtually became public property.

Caesar had been chosen pontifex maximus, or "highest priest," head of Rome's religious organization, in 63; Lepidas succeeded him in 44 and was allowed to keep the post until his death in 12 B.C.; Octavian then took it over and passed it on to his successors. Octavian was always careful not to accept a dictatorship or any new public office, but he was granted various honorary titles, chief of which were *Pater Patriae* ("Father of the Fatherland") and Augustus. These titles carried no powers, but the latter became so popular that eventually it was used as his name. Today historians regularly call him Augustus, at least for the years after 27 B.C. Not until A.D. 70 did one of Augustus's successors (Vespasian) assume the title "Emperor," yet it is so convenient that historians ordinarily use it for all rulers after 27 B.C.

After these slight political reforms, Augustus ruled calmly until his death in A.D. 14. He was always most deferential toward the senate, and he carefully preserved the old forms of election. His personal popularity was so great, however, that if he recommended a candidate, that man was sure of election. Presently he began recommending one candidate, and only one, for each office, and unless a man was so recommended, it was not worth his while to run. Soon after

**Imperial
finance**

**His lesser
offices:
Augustus**

**Other
officials
powerless
before him**

her first husband (Claudius Nero), and he formally adopted this stepson as heir and successor. When Augustus died in A.D. 14, Tiberius took over the rule. Each of the next three emperors was related in some way to Augustus or Tiberius, and between them the four members of this "Julio-Claudian" line presided over the destinies of the Empire for slightly more than half a century (A.D. 14-68). When the last of the dynasty (Nero) died, in 68, ninety-eight years had passed since Actium, and the imperial system was so firmly established that no one seriously suggested any other form of government.

Most of our information regarding the Julio-Claudian emperors comes from two bitterly hostile writers of the second century, the historian Tacitus and the biographer Suetonius. Their unforgettable accounts suggest that the four successors of Augustus were respectively a tyrant, a madman, a fool, and a monster. Today this version of history is still popular in Hollywood, but scholars paint quite a different picture. They remind us that the ancient writers limit their narratives almost wholly to the court life and military affairs, thereby ignoring more than 99 percent of the people of the Empire, and that even if everything they said were true (which it probably is not), it would show only the dark side of the picture. As a matter of fact, Tiberius (14-37) was an able and efficient administrator who did much to raise the standards of honesty and efficiency in provincial government. In later times public opinion considered him an excellent emperor, surpassed only by Augustus himself. Claudius (41-54) owed his position as emperor to his lavish bribery of the Praetorian Guard (the only troops in Italy), thereby establishing a precedent which subsequent emperors could not live down, but his reign also saw a beneficial reorganization of the bureaucracy in Rome, conscious efforts to broaden Roman citizenship, the construction of aqueducts and other public works, and humanitarian legislation. Not much that is good can be said for Gaius (sometimes called Caligula, 37-41) or Nero (54-68), but even the latter was hardly the monster that some have pictured. He was a weakling, but he permitted good ministers (notably the highly competent Stoic philosopher Seneca) to rule as they saw fit during the first several years of his reign. His fundamental troubles were financial, and only in the minds of the envious rich were they the result of his personal extravagance.

Nero's death (by suicide) was followed by a year and a half of civil war, fought mostly in Italy and concerned only with the ambitions of rival candidates for power. Four emperors succeeded one

**Good
and bad
emperors**

**The Flavian
emperors
(69-96)**

another in rapid succession, but the fourth, Vespasian, took a firm grip on the government and ruled well for ten years (69-79). He was succeeded by his two sons, Titus (79-81) and Domitian (81-96). Titus was called "the darling of mankind," but Domitian became unpopular in his later years and was murdered in 96.







**The "Good
Emperors"
(96-180)**

During the next eighty-five years the Empire was governed by the five "Good Emperors": Nerva (96-98), the soldier Trajan (98-117), the cosmopolitan and philanthropic Hadrian (117-138), the gentle Antoninus Pius (138-161), and the philosophic Marcus Aurelius (161-180). Under them the ancient world achieved its highest level of good government, economic prosperity, and contentment. As none of the first four of these emperors had a son, each chose an able man to be his successor and trained him thoroughly for his future duties. The plan worked well until Marcus Aurelius was succeeded by his incompetent son, Commodus, with whom troubled times began.

**Extent of
the Empire
in A.D. 180**

The Roman Empire attained its greatest extent early in the second century. The wars of Pompey in the 60's B.C. had led to the annexation of Syria and brought the states of central Asia Minor and Palestine into alliance with Rome; Caesar conquered Gaul during the 50's; and in 30 B.C. Octavian added Egypt. All the shores of the Mediterranean were then in Roman hands, and Rome's domain was bounded by deserts on the east and south, by the Atlantic on the west. The northern frontier remained unsatisfactory, however, and Augustus fought several wars in that region. At last a defensible frontier was established along the Rhine and Danube rivers, from the North Sea to the Black Sea. Augustus advised his successors to seek no more, and in general they followed this advice. Britain was annexed in A.D. 42; parts of southern Germany were added at the end of the century (really a frontier rectification to promote military efficiency); and much of modern Rumania was conquered by Trajan early in the second century. The civilized world was thus united under one government, and it enjoyed peace and prosperity under the beneficent rule of its emperors.

EXPANSION OF ROME'S EMPIRE

-  Held in 264 B.C.
-  Acquired, 264-201 B.C.
-  Acquired, 201-133 B.C.
-  Acquired, 133-44 B.C.
-  Acquired, 44 B.C.-14 A.D.
-  Acquired, 14-180 A.D.



V

Panel from the Ara Pacis (Uffizi, Florence)



ROMAN CIVILIZATION AND ITS DECLINE

THE STATE—LAW, LITERATURE, AND RELIGION—
HARBINGERS OF DECLINE

B.C.	Political Period	Law	Poetry	Prose	Science	Philosophy
500-300	Early Republic	XII Tables Praetor peregrinus Formulae	Ennius Plautus Terence	Cato • Polybius	• Alexandrians • Euclid • Archimedes	• Stoics • Epicureans • Skeptics
300-146	Roman Conquests		Lucretius	Cicero Sallust		Lucretius Cicero
133-30	Late Republic	Scaevola				
30-A.D. 14	Augustan Age	Jurisconsults	Vergil Horace Ovid	Livy		
A.D. 14-68	Julio-Claudians		Lucan		Pliny	Seneca • Epictetus
70-96	Flavians					
96-180	"Good Emperors"	Model Edict	Juvenal Martial	Tacitus Suetanius • Plutarch • Lucian	• Galen • Ptolemaeus	• Marcus Aurelius
193-235	Severi	Ulpian, Paul Papinian				• Philostratus
235-285	"Barrack room" emperors					• Plotinus
312-395	Constantine and after			Ammianus		• Julian
395-527	Fifth century invasions	Theodasian Code	Claudian			Augustine
527-565	Justinian	Corpus Juris Civilis				

• Wrote in Greek; all others in Latin.

12. THE STATE

Writing in the decade between 30 and 20 B.C., when the civil wars at last were ended and Augustus's organization of the Roman world was taking shape, the poet Vergil expressed his conception of Rome's imperial mission in a few famous lines. The poet has just described the meeting of Aeneas, the mythical ancestor of the Roman people, with his father Anchises in the lower world. After unrolling before his son's eyes a vivid summary of Rome's history down to Augustus, Anchises concludes:

*Rome's
imperial
task*

Though others mold more lifelike busts of bronze,
Carve living faces from the marble block,
Plead causes better, measure the high heavens,
Predict the ordered risings of the stars,—
Remember, Roman, it will be your task
To rule the peoples with authority,
To teach the arts of peace,
To spare the humble and beat down the proud.

[*Aeneid* VI, 847–853]

For almost two thousand years men have concurred in Vergil's judgment that imperial rule was Rome's greatest glory, just as the arts and sciences had once been that of Greece. We cannot do better, therefore, than to open our discussion of Roman civilization with a brief account of how Rome ruled the world that she had conquered at such fearful cost.

ROME'S IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT

The old Roman Republic had been governed by a few dozen families of rich landowners, who monopolized the seats in the senate, dealt out consulships, commands, priesthoods among the members of

*The
republican
oligarchy*

their social class, determined policy, and managed the affairs of state. During the long period of their supremacy these aristocrats performed their work well. They were intelligent, patriotic, honest, well trained. Young men of these families knew from childhood that some day they would occupy seats in the senate, and their whole education was directed toward public careers. So well were they trained for their duties, and so soberly did they fulfill them, that a Greek ambassador once reported that the Roman senate resembled "an assembly of kings."

*Its decline
after
150 B.C.*

Early in the second century before Christ thoughtful Romans, such as the elder Cato, began to see that world empire would some day render this patriarchal system obsolete. Being deeply attached to the old scheme of things, they became vociferously "isolationist," but they fought a losing battle. Fifty years later the Roman Republic began a decline which continued through a century of demagoguery and civil war. During this same hundred years Rome was also being sucked, willy-nilly, into the power vacuum created by the collapse of the Hellenistic monarchies that had succeeded Alexander the Great. At the end of the Republic, Rome ruled the Mediterranean world but she could not govern herself.

*Beginnings
of imperial
government*

Both in antiquity and in modern times historians have usually directed their attention to the lurid or dramatic aspects of this exciting century and have therefore overlooked the fact that it also saw great progress in the science and art of government. Failures have been widely advertised while successes have passed unnoticed. We hear much of the violence and rapacity of prominent Roman officials, largely because we have records of their misdeeds (often based on the biased accounts of political opponents or the fiery denunciations of ambitious prosecuting attorneys), but there were countless others who did their work well. These good officials are unknown to history, however, because they were never guilty of sedition and no one ever sued them for extortion. The solid foundations of the Roman Empire were being laid by such men as these, and the early emperors completed the task. The essentials of the Augustan system were established before Augustus ever came to power.

*The emperor
a symbol
of unity*

The government of imperial Rome was a monarchy, but in its first two centuries it was not an arbitrary despotism. Under Augustus himself, much depended upon the emperor's personal popularity, which made him seem a leader rather than a ruler. Later emperors retained a share of this popularity, at least among the common peo-

ple. The emperor was kept constantly in the public eye, and countless schemes were devised for raising him in the public esteem. He became a visible symbol of the unity of the Empire, a stimulus to patriotic enthusiasm, and he was revered as such.

Augustus always expressed the highest respect for the senate, and he was careful never to encroach openly upon its authority or prestige. Actually the powers of the senate declined steadily under the Empire, until at last they virtually disappeared. The members of the senate were still recognized as a separate order or social class in the state, entitled to wear distinctive ornaments and to be addressed by distinctive titles, but the old senatorial families of the Republic had nearly all become extinct by the time of Vespasian and their places were taken by a new aristocracy made up of men who had won imperial favor in one way or another. Since certain high officials of the Empire, such as the governors of provinces and the commanders of legions, were ordinarily picked from the senate, the emperors were obliged to promote able men to that order. A seat in the senate often came as the reward of high service to the state, but unfortunately others became senators because of their wealth or family connections or for less laudable reasons.

*The new
senatorial
aristocracy*

The senate still retained much of its old prestige and was believed to represent public opinion—even though the public opinion it represented was usually no more than that of the wealthy classes in the city of Rome. Sometimes, as in the days of Caligula, Nero, or Commodus, the senate might criticize emperors, but during the long period of the "Good Emperors" the two were on the best of terms. Moreover, those rare occasions on which the senate attempted to exercise its power merely advertised its futility. Its more competent members were so busy governing the Empire that they had no time for hostile demonstrations.

*Futility at
senatorial
opposition*

The Bureaucracy

The day-by-day work of governing the Empire fell to a body of trained bureauerats. There had been no regular bureaucracy in Republican Rome, where the work was done by elected officials and senatorial committees, or by their lieutenants, personal employees, or slaves. Caesar entrusted the details of administration to his personal slaves, and the early Julio-Claudians continued to fill important posts with slaves or freedmen. Many of these slaves were Greeks, whom

*Growth
of a
bureaucracy*

old-fashioned Romans grumblingly accused of intolerable arbitrariness and conceit. Augustus gave important posts to equestrians (members of the social class next below senators, mostly well-to-do businessmen), thus laying the foundations of a permanent bureaucracy. This body of professional civil servants was reorganized and greatly expanded by Claudius, and again by the Flavians. Its upper levels were recruited from the Roman senatorial and equestrian classes and from the army, but its lower ranks were recruited from all parts of the Empire. In the second century it governed the Empire, with the emperor himself little more than the top bureaucrat.

*The new
army*

The army, too, came to play a new role under the Empire. After the battle of Actium Octavian had about 600,000 men under arms, but during the next few years he reduced the number by more than half, and until the time of Marcus Aurelius the army never again contained more than 300,000 men. About half these soldiers were members of the legions, which admitted only Roman citizens, while the other half were auxiliaries, made up of provincials who received Roman citizenship upon discharge. In the first century the officers were Romans, or at least Italians, but in later times many provincials received important commands. Vespasian stopped recruiting common soldiers in Italy, and thereafter the rank and file of the army came from the provinces, either citizens (often the sons of discharged auxiliaries) or provincials. Italy and the peaceful provinces were almost denuded of troops, with the bulk of the army stationed along the frontiers. The army also performed a great service in Romanizing the provinces, especially those in the West. The discharged veteran was a man of consequence in his native village, who had learned Latin while in the army, known recruits and officers from other provinces, and become thoroughly imbued with the spirit of imperial Rome.

Taxation

The most serious difficulties facing the imperial government in the first century were financial. Under the late Republic, Roman citizens had been asked for no direct taxes because the income from tribute, booty, slaves, and the other profits of war adequately covered the cost of government. The return of peace cut off much of this revenue, and simultaneously the growth of the bureaucracy increased expenditures. In spite of his popularity, Augustus was reluctant to tax Roman citizens heavily, and he made up the annual deficits out of his own vast properties. With each succeeding emperor the situation became worse. At last, in the days of Nero, the government sought temporary



COLOSSEUM. (Galloway)

relief by inflating the currency, and it was reduced to such sorry expedients as confiscating the property of rich men on trumped-up charges of treason. Vespasian took over a bankrupt government but, by careful management and the ruthless taxation of everybody, he eventually made the treasury solvent. In the long run his extreme measures proved a boon to the people, especially the provincials. Heretofore taxation had been very uneven, varying from province to province according to the settlement made when the province was brought into the Empire. Vespasian taxed everybody to the limit, but when the emergency was over, taxes were reduced evenly and men were taxed more nearly in accordance with their ability to pay. When Trajan seized the gold mines of Dacia (Romania), the treasury acquired a new source of revenue and the financial crisis was alleviated. In the second century taxes were collected honestly and equitably, and they were not excessive.

Augustus and his successors spent money lavishly on public works, both at Rome and in the provinces. An excellent system of roads, built by skillful engineers, connected the various parts of the Empire. Their primary purpose, of course, was to facilitate the movement of

**Roman
roads**

troops, but when the roads were once built they could be used by merchants and travelers as well as soldiers, which augmented the economic as well as the military strength of the Empire. Moreover, the roads were so well policed that brigandage virtually disappeared, and pirates were swept from the seas. The first two centuries of the Empire thus became one of the few periods in history when a man could travel in comparative safety from one end of the civilized world to the other.

**Other
public
services**

The imperial authorities also spent vast sums of money for harbor improvements, aqueducts, and public buildings such as theaters and temples. Municipalities, too, spent money freely for such works and often received imperial aid for their programs. Cities and emperors set aside money for works of art, libraries, public professorships of literature, and in a few cases for research and the teaching of such sciences as medicine. In addition to providing peace and security, the imperial bureaucracy did what it could to make life pleasant and to promote refinement in all parts of the Empire.

The Provinces

**Excellent
provincial
governors**

Undoubtedly the provinces profited most from the establishment of the Empire, and in them its beneficent work may be seen to the best advantage. Many of the provinces had been cruelly misgoverned in the last century of the Republic, but after Actium things began to improve. Tiberius stamped out the worst abuses, and in the second century the provincial governors usually lived up to high standards of public service. Moreover, the provincial cities retained a great amount of local self-government. Distances and communications being what they were, officials at Rome could not do more than exercise a general supervision, and provincial governors had neither the power nor the staff to impose their wills upon reluctant populations. The Roman officials were careful not to interfere with local customs, laws, or religions, and they left the details of local government to native officials. The result was that very few persons in the Roman Empire considered themselves oppressed.

**Only
Orientals
dissatisfied**

During these two centuries, acute dissatisfaction with the imperial system arose only among the Orientals, the Jews being especially hard to govern. Not even the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 subdued them, and they rebelled again in 115 and still again in 135. Other Orientals were less rebellious, but Rome could not appease the

hatred which she had inherited from the Greeks. Considerations of policy caused her to defend Greeks and Greek culture against the rising tide of Orientalism. This pro-Greek policy, foreseen long before by Eumenes II and his son Attalus III of Pergamum (see page 168), perpetuated Greek cultural supremacy in the Near East for several centuries, but at the same time it added to the growing restlessness of the Orient. Moreover, the Orientals were gaining strength daily, and after the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180, their influence upon the government and life of the Empire became more obvious year by year.

Elsewhere men quickly became reconciled to the new regime. Peace and good government brought economic prosperity, and energetic men piled up enormous fortunes. Both at Rome and in the provinces these parvenus presently supplanted the old aristocrats as the dominant social class, and naturally they were loyal to the imperial system which enabled them to prosper so magnificently. They came to form a new imperial aristocracy, and in the great days of the second century they, their sons, and their hangers-on staffed the upper levels of the imperial government. As most of them were of non-Roman origin, their successes reconciled all sorts of people to imperial rule and made men everywhere feel that they too might profit from the imperial regime. The social base upon which the Roman Empire rested was thus broadened immensely, as may be seen from a glance at the men who became emperors, those who sat in the senate, and those who enjoyed the rights of citizenship.

The Julio-Claudian emperors (14-68) had belonged to the old Roman aristocracy but the Flavians (69-96) were Italians: Vespasian's father had been a small-town businessman and banker, and Vespasian himself had risen through the army. The "Good Emperors" (98-180) were descended from Romans who had settled in Spain or southern Gaul in the days of the Republic, though some Spanish or Gallic blood may have flowed in their veins. Septimius Severus (193-211) was born in North Africa, partly of Roman and partly of native ancestry. He was thoroughly Romanized, but his sister could not speak Latin correctly, and his wife was a full-blooded Syrian, the daughter of a Syrian priest. His sons and nephews were scarcely Roman.

A parallel evolution may be seen in the membership of the Roman senate. A few Italians entered that body before the Civil Wars, and Caesar once created a scandal by introducing two Gauls. Under the

**Social
origins
of the new
leaders**

**(1) the
emperors**

**(2) the
senate**

Julio-Claudians a majority of the seats went to Italians, and in the second century the senate contained many Gauls, Spaniards, and Africans. Greeks, too, began to enter in numbers under the "Good Emperors," especially Greeks from the cities of Asia Minor. It is not surprising that Septimius Severus and his line (193-235) honored many Orientals by making them senators. In fact, the various peoples whom Rome had conquered were gradually taking over the government and the highest honors of the Empire.

(3) Roman
citizens

The extension of Roman citizenship is equally instructive. After 88 B.C. all free men native to Italy enjoyed the rights of Roman citizens. Sulla is said to have emancipated and enfranchised ten thousand of his slaves in order to carry an election. Pompey and Caesar, Antony and Octavian, all were most generous in granting citizenship to prominent provincials who had helped them against rivals. These new Roman citizens became a sort of minor aristocracy in the provinces, loyal to Rome and a force of great importance in strengthening the Empire. The Julio-Claudian emperors, especially Claudius, continued this liberal policy, and every year the army discharged



ROMAN AQUEDUCT (Near Nîmes, France). (Galloway)

thousands of new citizens into civilian life from the auxiliaries. In the second century practically everyone in the Empire from the middle and upper classes was a Roman citizen, and in 212 Caracalla (a son of Septimius Severus) extended citizenship to all free men in the Empire, thus completing an evolution that had begun with the foundation of Rome itself. Rome, like modern America, could absorb large numbers of foreigners and make them citizens.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND ITS DECLINE

Rome's good government and the *Pax Romana* brought economic prosperity to the whole Mediterranean world for upward of two centuries. An index to this prosperity may be seen in the rising population of the Empire. Ancient statistics are far from satisfactory, but the best modern estimates indicate that during the century and a half between the death of Augustus and the advent of Marcus Aurelius (14-161)

*Increasing
population*



MAISON CARRÉE (Nîmes, France). (Galloway)

the population of the Roman Empire rose by about 50 percent, from approximately seventy million to well over 100 million persons. Only since 1800 has this rate of population growth been surpassed in Europe, and there could be no better evidence of a high economic prosperity whose benefits reached out to all classes of society.

**Archeo-
logical
evidence of
prosperity**

Archeology is equally eloquent about the economic prosperity of these two centuries, for it has laid bare the flourishing condition of the cities of Italy and the provinces under the Empire. The most famous case is that of Pompeii, a city of about twenty thousand inhabitants near Naples in southern Italy. After being severely shaken by an earthquake in A.D. 63, Pompeii was rebuilt rapidly and splendidly but was then suddenly buried under ashes and lava from nearby Mount Vesuvius in 79. Archeologists have now dug up the greater part of the city. We can see the sumptuous residences, public buildings, theaters, and baths that made life pleasant for the population. Pompeii was not alone, however, and similar cities have been found in many other parts of the Empire. Moreover, from Spain and Britain to Syria and Egypt, countless roads, bridges, aqueducts, and other constructions bear witness to the lavishness with which men were then able to build.

**Economic
decline
in Italy**

This peace and prosperity reigned for about two hundred years, after which decline began. It appeared first in Italy, then spread throughout the West, and in the third century it engulfed most parts of the Roman Empire. The reasons for Italy's economic decline were of many sorts. Much of her prosperity during the last decades of the Republic had been artificially stimulated by generals such as Sulla, Pompey, and Caesar, who brought home huge quantities of booty. Such crude exploitation of the Empire ended with the wars, but the provinces were made to pay tribute for many years to come. Presently even this mild exploitation ceased, however, and in the first century after Christ Italy's prosperity rested upon sounder foundations. Rome had made herself the financial and banking capital of her empire, or at least of the West, and much of her income represented interest and profits from investments in the provinces. Italy also received a steady income in exchange for exports. Various Italian cities had begun manufacturing pottery, hardware, and other articles, which they exported. Italian wines were a luxury item that played an important part in her export trade. Moreover, Italians still held most of the high political positions and drew their liberal salaries from the provinces; a major Italian export was good government. During the

second century, however, all this was changed. The western provinces gradually built up their own industries and therefore imported fewer goods than formerly from Italy. Having accumulated capital of their own, they depended less upon loans and investments from Italy, and their citizens began to hold high political offices. Rome's political merits undermined her economic supremacy and eventually she lost her economic leadership because of them.

Slavery had been an important factor in Italy's economic life during the late Republic. The small farms of earlier times were amalgamated into huge estates, called *latifundia*, which were worked by cheap slave labor. Under the Empire, however, slavery declined rather rapidly. Perhaps the decline was encouraged by Stoic humanitarianism, but it was caused primarily by economic forces. In antiquity most slaves were either prisoners of war or the victims of pirates, but the Empire eliminated both of these sources. Moreover, slavery is always wasteful (a slave can have no incentive to work hard or to be careful) and its success depends upon the cheapness of slaves. As the sources of Rome's slaves vanished, their cost rose and slavery lost much of its attractiveness. Landowners found it more lucrative to turn their land over to sharecroppers (sometimes their freedmen or former slaves), who eventually declined into the position of serfs bound to the soil. There is a certain amount of evidence to show that the owners of *latifundia* and their slaves had already ruined much of the land of central and southern Italy. Even the sharecroppers, encouraged by self-interest, could do little with their farms, and before the end of the second century, Italian agriculture was in the doldrums. The reverberations of this agricultural depression spread throughout the Mediterranean world in the third century.

**Slavery
replaced
by serfdom**

would grant. Theoretically each praetor drew up his own list (called his *edict*), but in practice he usually copied his predecessor's edict. It was always possible to add to the list, however, in which case the praetor was really arrogating to himself the powers of legislation. Roman law thus became judge-made law, and when deficiencies in the *ius civile* became apparent, the urban praetors began borrowing heavily from their peregrine colleagues. Before the end of the Republic, the old Laws of the Twelve Tables were completely buried beneath these new formulary additions, and the *ius civile* had become identical with the *ius gentium*.

**Popularity
of the *ius
gentium***

At first Roman civil law was used only for Roman citizens, but as it improved under the influence of the *ius gentium*, other peoples became anxious to share in its benefits. On several occasions in the second century before Christ, Italian cities, allies of Rome, petitioned the senate for permission to use Roman law. This privilege was readily granted. When new provinces were taken over, they were governed by praetors who presided over courts in which the *ius gentium* was used in cases between Roman citizens and provincials. After 88 B.C., when all Italians were citizens, such cases became quite numerous. In later years the right to use these courts, and to sue and be sued under Roman law, was one of the major benefits accruing to the new citizen. The excellence of Roman law was therefore a factor of importance in reconciling provincials to Roman rule.

Jurisconsults

**Praetors
and the law**

It must be borne in mind that the Roman praetors were primarily politicians and not necessarily men deeply learned in the law. Only the great respect which all Romans of the old school felt for the laws kept these men from playing havoc with the legal system, especially during the turbulent last years of the Republic. There was much quarreling about jury panels, and there were frequent charges of bribery and the intimidation of juries, but the most reckless praetors respected the edicts and formulas of their predecessors. It must also be borne in mind that the praetors came and went quickly, holding office for only one year. Their success as jurists came from the fact that the better praetors were willing to listen to the advice of others who knew more than they about law. These learned men, who advised the praetors, and who really built the magnificent edifice of the Roman law, were the *jurisconsults*.

From early times there had been men at Rome whose knowledge of the law was held in high esteem and whose opinions were carefully sought by prospective litigants. These men were called *jurisconsults*. Sometimes they gave public lectures on the law, sometimes they wrote books about it, sometimes they gave formal instruction to young men. As they had no legal standing in the courts or the community, anyone could call himself a *jurisconsult*, and a man's standing in the profession was determined by the judgment of his colleagues. The prestige of some *jurisconsults* was so high that their books were read and their opinions quoted long after their deaths. It sometimes happened that they were elected to the praetorship, or even to the consulship, but even if they never held high office, their influence was felt by others who were in a position to effect practical reforms. These *jurisconsults* were responsible for much of the progress made by Roman law.

**Juris-
consults**

Augustus made little change in the courts or the law, though he was always careful to have praetors friendly to himself. His most important innovation in the legal field was the naming of certain individuals as official *jurisconsults*, whose precepts judges must follow. Other men might write books and express opinions about the law, however, and the next hundred years saw great activity along these lines, with *jurisconsults* falling into different schools according to their methods of interpreting the law. At last Hadrian directed a distinguished *jurisconsult* to draw up a model edict, listing all possible formulas, and ordered all praetors to follow this edict thereafter. At about the same time a man named Gaius published an important textbook called the *Institutes*, covering the whole field of law in a systematic manner. The most famous of the *jurisconsults* came in the days of the Severi, early in the third century, chief among them being Ulpian (c. 170-228), Paul (fl. 200), and Papinian (d. 212), but these men were codifiers rather than creators. The creative period of Roman law, which began in the second century before Christ, had run its course by the time of Hadrian.

**Civil law
under the
Empire**

Late in the third century the formulary system was replaced by the "cognitio." Thereafter a judge, appointed by the emperor, heard and cross-examined witnesses until he made up his mind as to the facts in the case. These judges may have been arbitrary and authoritarian, but the law they administered was still the old Roman law as set forth by the great *jurisconsults* and modified by the decrees of the emperors.

Cognitio

**Corpus
Iuris
Civilis**

The later history of the Roman law may be dismissed in a few sentences. The troubled times following the fall of the Severi (235) offered little incentive to legal progress, and the fourth and fifth centuries were a period of deep cultural change when law, like everything else, was changing rapidly and the government was becoming more autocratic. These changes are reflected in the Theodosian Code, published in 438, which contained the principal imperial decrees since the time of Constantine, who had died in 337. After another hundred years the Emperor Justinian, again finding the law in a state of great confusion, ordered a new code drawn up. His *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (529-534) has ever since remained the classic exposition of Roman law. It was published in three parts; the *Institutes*, a textbook on general legal principles, resting heavily upon Gaius; the *Digest*, or *Pandects*, an enormous collection of the opinions of juriconsults, some dating from Republican times; the *Code*, containing whatever decrees of the emperors from Hadrian to Justinian were still in force. The *Novels* were added later for new decrees as they were issued. The most important of them all is the *Digest*, whose fifty volumes contain thousands of excerpts, systematically arranged to cover the whole field of law.

**Importance
of Roman
law**

Justinian's *Corpus* was the final statement of Roman law. After a period of neglect in the early Middle Ages, the law of the *Corpus* was revived in the West shortly after 1000. A new period in European legal history then began, and Roman law spread rapidly throughout western Europe. There have since been only two important systems of law in the West, the Roman and the Anglo-Saxon: Anglo-Saxon law now holds sway in the British possessions and the United States, while the law of western Europe and Latin America grew directly from Roman law. Even the British lawyers who created the Anglo-Saxon law, late in the Middle Ages, were deeply influenced by Roman ideas about law. Rome passed on to the modern world a law that reflected her spirit at its best, a law that was enlightened, sober, objective, and humane.

ROMAN LITERATURE

**Greek
influences
on Roman
literature**

The Romans showed less regard for literature than for law. Their ablest young men would devote long years to the study of law, but they seemed to regard literature as something foreign, or as a refinement for the cultured few rather than as something to be shared by

all. No Latin author ever reached as wide a public as did Homer and the Greek dramatists. Moreover, Latin literature was always heavily indebted to the Greeks. Much of Rome's early literature was translated from the Greek; Roman writers read deeply in Greek literature and took Greek works as their models; and the Romans have often been accused of being mere imitators. Such a charge is quite unjust, however, for the best Roman writers retained their national character, and, in spite of their Greek education and a few Greek ornaments attached to their works, their spirit and their ideas were as fundamentally Roman as were those of the jurists themselves. The Roman orators, historians, and poets owed much to Greek predecessors, yet their views of the world remained fundamentally Roman.

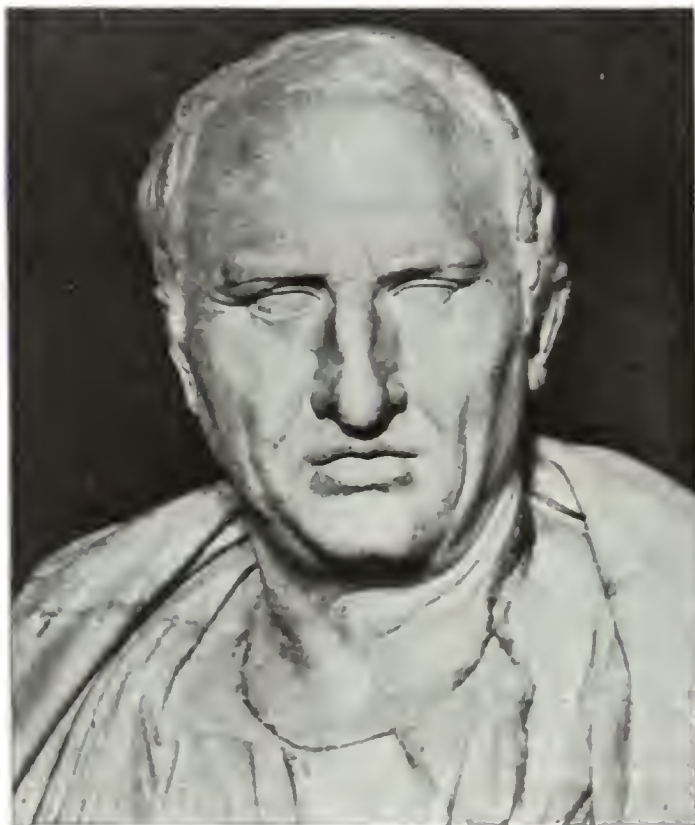
The earliest Romans presumably had legends, stories, and popular poetry, but, Roman character being what it was, this primitive literature was not of Homeric stature and we know little about it. After the conquest of southern Italy and Sicily, Romans came into more frequent contact with Greeks and learned to appreciate Greek literature and art. However, the Latin translations of Greek works which presently began to appear were not the work of Romans. Among the earliest Latin books was a translation of the *Odyssey*, made by a Greek slave about 240. A few years later an Italian named Naevius composed a Latin epic about the First Punic War. Then the Italian Plautus (who died in 184) and the former slave Terence (d. 159) staged a number of free translations of Greek comedies, especially those of Menander (see page 129). In later times Romans sometimes composed comedies and tragedies in the Greek style, but they never were very successful. Early in the second century a freedman named Ennius (d. 169) composed an epic poem dealing with the Second Punic War. At this time Cato the Censor, the first true Roman writer, was subjecting the *Graeculi* to his merciless ridicule (see page 173). He knew Greek literature well, and was much influenced by it, but his published works were on good Roman subjects: orations, treatises on law, a history of Roman and Italian origins, and a book on agriculture. After Cato, Rome saw little literary activity of a noteworthy sort until the time of Cicero.

Cicero has usually been taken as Rome's most important literary man and as the greatest master of Latin prose. Being a good Roman, he considered a political career the one most worth striving for, but we have seen his pathetic failure as a politician. Had it not been for his literary talents, Cicero would scarcely be known today. Cicero

Second-
century
writers

Cicero

was one of the most widely educated men of antiquity, thoroughly at home in Greek and Latin literature, a deep student of philosophy, well informed on history, and even interested in fine arts. His enemies admitted that he was Rome's most powerful orator, with the great Caesar only second best. Over fifty of his orations on political topics have been preserved. We also have more than nine hundred letters written during the last twenty years of his life, which make these years better known to us than any comparable period in antiquity.



CICERO. (Capitoline Museum, Rome)

During the First Triumvirate and the Civil War, Cicero was out of favor politically and spent his time writing books on many subjects. One book, dealing with the Roman orators before his time, was almost a history of Latin literature; others treated moral and political philosophy; and still others discussed the nature of the gods and divination. Though Cicero never sought fame as a jurisconsult or

wrote on law, he composed two dialogues (*The Republic* and *The Laws*) in which he developed ideas about government that were found useful by Augustus when organizing the Roman Empire.

The Roman Historians

The Romans had a strong feeling for history, and even in early times priests kept records of important events. They preserved the names of the consuls and other annual magistrates, listed prodigies and strange happenings that might indicate the will of the gods, and recorded battles (or at least victories) and treaties. In the second century historical writers began to explore the pontifical archives, and toward the end of the century a pontifex maximus published the whole set of *Annales maximi* in eighty volumes. This provided Roman historians with much reliable material, yet the truth is that most of them preferred another sort of history. Sometimes their history was mythology, and sometimes it was political propaganda.

**The
Annales
maximi**

Mythical history dealt with the origins of Rome and the early Republic. It told stories of Romulus and Remus, who founded the city, of its early kings and of their wars with their neighbors; it reminded men of the tyranny of the Etruscan kings, their expulsion, and the founding of the Republic; and it glorified the heroes of the early Republic—Horatius, who saved Rome by defending a bridge single-handed, or Cincinnatus, who left his plow to become dictator and after winning a battle went home to finish his plowing. The early parts of Cato's history probably were made up mostly of such stories. The last part of the book, on the other hand, illustrated the other side of Roman historical writing. Here Cato dealt with his own times, introducing his own speeches and making propaganda against the Scipios and his numerous other enemies. This sort of history became quite important during the last century of the Republic. Several persons wrote propagandist histories of the Gracchan disturbances, most of them hostile, while laudatory accounts of Sulla and other political leaders appeared in later years. Caesar wrote his own laudatory accounts of his conquest of Gaul and the Civil War, and Cicero never tired of telling and retelling—in Latin and in Greek, in prose and in verse—the story of how he saved Rome from Catiline.

**Mythical
and propa-
gandist
history**

Of Rome's three greatest historians—Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus—the first and the last fall into the category of propagandist historians. As a young man Sallust entered the turbulent political life of Rome

Sallust

during the 50's B.C., distinguishing himself as a demagogic tribune attached to Caesar and publishing vitriolic attacks upon Cicero. Caesar later made him governor of Numidia, where his rapacity brought him a huge fortune. Thereafter he lived at ease in Rome until his death in 34. His histories were the fruit of his leisure. The first, a tract on *The Catilinarian Conspiracy*, was really an attack upon Cicero, though more sober and therefore more effective than his earlier invectives. He systematically belittled Cicero, patronized him, laughed at him, declared Catiline typical of the decadent Roman aristocracy, and made Caesar the only admirable person in the story. Sallust continued his writing with a tract (called *The Jugurthine War*) in favor of Marius and then set to work on a large history of Sulla and his successors. This book is no longer extant, but excerpts indicate that it was a terrific indictment of the dictator. Later Romans considered Sallust the best of their historians, chiefly because of his brilliant literary style, but modern critics are more likely to regard him as an unreliable propagandist.

Tacitus

Tacitus approached the history of the Empire in a somewhat similar spirit. Born in the early days of Nero, he served in the bureaucracy under the Flavians, became consul in A.D. 97, and wrote his histories under Trajan. He opened his first book, the *Histories*, with the civil wars that followed Nero and continued with a highly critical account of the Flavians. Later he wrote the *Annals*, dealing with the Julio-Claudians in the same spirit. Less than half of what he wrote has been preserved, but until recently his judgments of Tiberius, Claudius, and Nero were taken as authoritative. Modern scholars are highly critical of Tacitus, though they rank him far above Sallust as a historian. Tacitus's friend Suetonius wrote the *Lives of the Twelve Caesars* (Caesar to Domitian), giving more gossip but less sober history and being equally hostile to his subjects.

Livy

Livy approached more closely the modern ideal of a scientific historian. Born at Padua in 59 B.C., he reached Rome in the days of the Second Triumvirate. Thoroughly discouraged by what he saw about him, he took up a study of Rome's past for consolation, and he began to write her history to encourage his contemporaries by showing them what sort of men their forebears had been. In the course of his long life he produced 142 volumes, tracing Rome's history from the beginning to 9 B.C. The thirty-five volumes still extant deal with the period from the beginning to 293, and from 218 to 167, but we have brief summaries of the lost volumes. Livy was a much better scholar than

either of the other historians mentioned here, though having a less vivid literary style than theirs. He was antiquity's best example of the scholar-historian—a man who, having no personal knowledge of the events of which he wrote, compiled his narrative in a library. Livy always remained a Pompeian at heart, idealizing the old Republic, yet Augustus received him at court and made him tutor of the boy who eventually became the Emperor Claudius. Sometimes modern writers detect the influence of the tutor in that emperor's humane legislation.

The Roman Poets

Though the Roman poets did not equal their Greek predecessors in creative imagination, they invented one major form of poetry, the satire. Like Greek comedy, Roman satire was born in the revels of the carnival season, when individuals might criticize prominent persons with great freedom. Satire then took the form of a poetic monologue, usually pungent and caustic, sometimes coarse and scurrilous, and always lampooning prominent individuals or types. Many Romans tried their hands at this form of social criticism, but two satirists stand out above the others. The poet Horace (65–8 B.C.) had fought under Brutus at Philippi, after which he lived in poverty until Augustus presented him with a farm near Rome in 34 B.C. Thereafter he led a serene and happy existence as a sort of poet laureate for the Empire. His satires reflected the bitterness of his earlier period, before he had won the emperor's favor. In later years he wrote the charming lyrics by which he is best known today. Horace was fundamentally a moralist, ever praising the old Roman virtues of courage, steadfastness, simplicity of living, and reverence. Rome's other great satirist was Juvenal (c. 60–c. 140), who, in the days of Trajan, deplored the social changes which he thought were undermining Roman life.

**Roman
satire**

More important than the satirists, however, were Lucretius and Vergil. Little is known of the life of Lucretius (c. 96–55 B.C.) but his *De rerum natura* ("On the Nature of Things") is prized as one of the world's great philosophical poems. Here Lucretius devotes about 7500 lines to expounding the Epicurean philosophy, and his poem is characterized by a high moral earnestness rarely surpassed in literature. Being extremely critical of the old gods, he believed that a knowledge of the truth—that is, of Epicurus's materialistic philosophy

Lucretius

—would free men from the sufferings and fears that he attributed to religion. Yet at heart Lucretius was a deeply religious man, disgusted with the conventional religion of his day. Though a member of the old Roman aristocracy which had once ruled Rome, he had only horror for the post-Sullan Rome in which he lived. Lucretius's great poem and its trenchant criticisms of the existing order illustrate an important aspect of the decline of the Roman Republic.

Vergil

Vergil was born in 70 and died in 19 B.C. Born and raised in rural Italy, he first wrote the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, dealing with shepherds and agriculture, but his fame rests upon the *Aeneid*, in which he glorified Augustus and the Roman Empire. In this long epic Vergil retold the legend of how the Trojan hero Aeneas, after escaping from Troy when that city was captured by the Greeks, migrated to Italy where his descendant Romulus eventually founded Rome. It was the story of how a hero saved something of the old Trojan civilization (especially its gods) and set in motion forces that eventually enabled Rome to bring peace and law to the civilized world. Unlike the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, this epic is not primarily an adventure story. Its heroes fight much and well, but they do not fight joyfully, and their delight is in the arts of peace. Homer's heroes capture and destroy cities, but Vergil's Aeneas prefers to build them. Writing immediately after a period of unprecedented destruction and slaughter, Vergil made it his task to glorify the labor which the founding of Rome had cost and the virtues which had made her greatness possible. He was one of the world's great pacifists, quick to see the sordid underside of military glory. He sympathized most with those who suffered most, yet he had come to the conclusion that, if Rome was to fulfill her great mission in the world, these terrible things had to be. Troy had to be destroyed; the most just of men had to die miserably; and long and bloody wars had to be fought in Latium. Many of his companions deserted along the way, but Aeneas remained firm, always obeying the gods. "I do not seek Italy of my own will," he exclaimed on one occasion, but he possessed a full measure of the old Roman virtues of steadfastness and courage, perseverance and devotion to duty, and in the end he reached the goal that the gods had set before him. It was Vergil's hope that the Roman people, filled with such virtues as these and inspired by such heroes, might ever continue in their high mission of teaching men the arts of peace and repressing those who would disturb that peace. Surely an empire built at such cost, by such people, and for such pur-

poses, must last forever. The gods themselves could not will otherwise.

The third great poet of the Augustan Age was Ovid (43 B.C.—A.D. 17). Born to a well-to-do family and having missed the horrors of the Civil Wars and the proscriptions, he led an easy and carefree life for many years. He devoted his facility at making verses to light and rather lascivious works, such as the famous *Art of Love*. As he approached middle age, however, he became implicated in a scandal and was exiled by Augustus to a remote port on the Black Sea. Here he passed the rest of his life, in spite of repeated efforts to obtain pardon and recall. His most famous poem is the long *Metamorphoses*, from which the artists and literary men of early modern times learned much of their Greek and Roman mythology.

Ovid

These brief sketches of Rome's brighter literary lights show that great literature was produced at Rome in three different periods. There was the period of the late Republic, with Cicero, Lueretius, and Sallust; the golden age of Augustus followed, with Vergil, Livy, Horace, and Ovid; and the silver age of Trajan produced Tacitus, Suetonius, and Juvenal. Thereafter little important writing was done in Latin for more than two centuries. Literary activity revived toward the end of the fourth century, when the last pagan authors appeared: the poet Claudian, and Ammianus Marcellinus, a historian whose works bear comparison with the best that Rome produced.

Few later writers

Greek Writers and Scientists

Roman civilization and the Latin language spread widely and became deeply rooted in the western provinces during the first two centuries of the Empire, more perhaps for convenience and because of their obvious superiority than because of any deliberate design by the imperial authorities. East of the Adriatic Sea, however, they made little progress. In fact, the Romans did what they could to favor the Greeks and their culture in these eastern provinces. The Roman Empire was therefore divided into two parts, both linguistically and culturally, with the dividing line running from Epirus (the modern Albania) in a northerly direction to the Danube and down that river to the Black Sea. East of this line the world was Greek; west of it, Roman.

The Greeks under the Empire

The troubled conditions of the first century before Christ left the Greeks little energy for creative work in literature or the fine arts. They produced a few famous statues (notably the Laocoön group),

Their literary activity

but their literary men were of no great importance, and the first century after Christ was still more barren. The Empire brought great improvement to the Greek East, both economically and intellectually, but Greek writers still compared badly with their classic predecessors. They possessed a certain skill as rhetoricians and popular orators, they wrote valuable though uninspired histories, and they compiled useful treatises on natural science, but only two of them deserve mention here.

Plutarch

Plutarch was born about A.D. 45, near the Greek Thebes. He was the first important native Greek writer since Polybius, two and a half centuries before, and the last in antiquity. After studying philosophy at Athens, he traveled in Egypt, spent several years as a lecturer in Italy, returned to his native village under Domitian, and died there early in the reign of Hadrian. His fame rests principally on his *Parallel Lives of the Greeks and Romans*. Here we find fifty lives of great men, half of them Greeks and half Romans, arranged in pairs in such a way that men of similar achievement may be compared—Caesar paired with Alexander, for example, and Demosthenes with Cicero. Plutarch was more interested in morals than in politics, and he wrote primarily to hold up models before his readers and to show the effects of virtue and vice. These *Lives* were very popular in early modern times, and it was from them that Shakespeare took the material for his Roman plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Lucian

An important Greek writer of the second century was Lucian, who flourished in the days of Marcus Aurelius. Born in Syria, Lucian did not learn Greek until he was ten years old, but he passed much of his life as a lecturer and writer in Athens. Here he composed many brief essays and dialogues in which he poked fun at traditional superstitions and beliefs, even ridiculing the Olympian gods and the Homeric heroes. Homer he dismissed as a "liar," Socrates as a tiresome old fool, and he satirized society generally. He did this the more easily because he was an outsider, a Syrian, with no childhood attachment to the things he ridiculed, but the fact that he won wide applause by such slashing criticism of ancient heroes shows how rapidly society was changing in his day.

Writers on science

Writers on scientific subjects under the Empire were compilers rather than discoverers or original thinkers. The Romans, and Latin writers generally, had little interest in scientific research, but Pliny (23–79) compiled an encyclopedic *Natural History* in which he

summarized much of the scientific knowledge of his day. The Greek Galen (130–200), who served as personal physician to Marcus Aurelius, was the most famous of ancient medical writers after Hippocrates, and his numerous works were accepted as authoritative until modern times. Contemporary with Galen was the Alexandrian astronomer and geographer Claudius Ptolemaeus. He summed up the astronomical lore of antiquity and gave classic expression to what is now known as the “Ptolemaic astronomy.” He declared the earth to be the center of the universe, with the moon, planets, sun, and stars revolving around it. His theory was universally accepted in western Europe until the sixteenth century.

ROMAN RELIGION

The religion of the earliest Romans was one appropriate to primitive herdsmen and farmers and not much different from that of the other peoples of ancient Italy. These peoples all worshiped vague spirits of the field and forest, called *numina*, which in return aided and protected the worshiper, his family, his possessions, and his state. The practical Romans spent little time inventing myths and stories about these spirits, they made neither statues nor pictures of them, and they built no temples to them, but they scrupulously invoked them with standard formulas at stated times and seasons. These spirits and gods were of various sorts. The Lares guarded the clearing, the Penates the pantry, Janus the house door, and Vesta the hearth and its fire. The worship of these simple spirits was a family affair. Other gods were more elaborate and had other functions: the Bona Dea (the “Good Goddess”) granted fertility to fields and women; special deities looked after cattle, crops, or fruits; and still others helped in war or guarded the state. Jupiter came to be regarded as the best and greatest of the gods, ruling justly over the other gods and the world like a true Roman, whether the head of a family, the head of a state, or the head of a world empire.

The Romans worshiped their gods in a variety of ways, both privately and publicly. Sometimes the worshiper merely performed a trivial act of reverence; sometimes there were rather licentious holidays; sometimes there were stately processions or expensive sacrifices of cattle, sheep, or swine. Rome also had an elaborate priesthood, composed of several “colleges” (groups) of priests who looked after the different festivals or presided at public worship.

**Earth
spirits**

Priesthoods

The most important of these colleges was that of the twelve pontiffs, over which the pontifex maximus presided. These pontiffs had charge of the *ius divinum*, or that part of the civil law which touched on religion, but they also concerned themselves with many matters which we would consider purely secular. Roman priests did not form a distinct caste, set apart for religious activities, as do the clergy today. On the contrary, they all were magistrates after a fashion, and they wielded great political power. It was customary for prominent politicians to hold one or more priesthoods, and they especially coveted the post of pontifex maximus. Julius Caesar secured this office at considerable expense in the way of bribes, and in later times the emperor always served as pontifex maximus.

**Etruscan
and Greek
influences**

The Etruscans, and later the Greeks, taught the Romans much about religion. The Etruscan contribution often bordered on magic, much of it being concerned with devices for learning the will of the gods from portents, the flights of birds, or the livers of sacrificial sheep. Specially trained priests, known as "augurs," interpreted these signs according to elaborate rules. The Etruscans also taught the Romans to honor the gods with temples and with the athletic contests that eventually degenerated into bloody gladiatorial shows. The Greeks, on the other hand, contributed several gods and much mythology. Various Greek gods, such as Apollo, were added to the Roman pantheon, and the major Roman deities were identified with their Greek counterparts: Jupiter with Zeus, Juno with Hera, and so forth. Temples were built in Greek architectural styles and ornamented with Greek statues and paintings. On occasion, Romans even made long trips, sometimes at state expense, to consult the oracle at Delphi, and under the late Republic and the early Empire they sometimes sought initiation into Greek mysteries.

**Mysteries
of Bacchus
forbidden
(186 B.C.)**

Though Greek influence upon Roman religion began under the early kings, it increased rapidly in the third century before Christ, and it attained its great impetus in the second. Of course it was opposed strongly by Cato and other conservative Romans, whose opposition reached a climax in 186, in the midst of the campaign against the Scipios (see page 172). The mysteries of Bacchus (Dionysus) had recently been introduced into Italy, and by the time they reached Rome there were hair-raising stories about the crimes committed by devotees of this new god. When an excited consul laid the matter before the senate, that body passed a decree forbidding the new cult, and several persons were executed for not heeding

the decree. This episode deserves careful study because of its seeming departure from Rome's usual tolerance in religious matters. It must be noted, however, that the decree merely forbade organized groups, or churches, and provided explicitly that a man might receive permission to worship Bacchus in private if he so desired. The senate was concerned only with the political aspects of the new cult. It claimed the right to prohibit politically undesirable religious organizations, but it did not attempt to impose any religious beliefs or practices upon the public. This slight flurry has well been called a dress rehearsal for the later prosecution of Christians.

New Greek cults may have influenced the religious life of Rome in the second century, but Greek philosophy influenced it even more, at least among educated people. To the great dismay of Cato and other conservatives, Greek philosophers began lecturing at Rome somewhat before the middle of that century, and a hundred years later most educated Romans knew something of Greek philosophy. These foreign philosophers taught an advanced skepticism that dissolved the old theologies—or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that educated Romans were outgrowing their primitive theologies and that skeptical philosophy provided them with catchwords to justify their doubts. A certain number of Romans, including Julius Caesar, called themselves Epicureans and discarded all religion—even though Caesar was pontifex maximus!—and we have seen how the poet Lucretius set forth the teachings of that Greek philosopher in his noble poem *De Reum Natura*.

**Greek
philosophy
at Rome**

Other Romans were scandalized by the near atheism of the Epicureans and took up Stoicism instead. Philosophers of this school left a place in the universe for God, and they had much to say about duty and justice, which virtues were always highly prized by the Romans. Eventually most of the old Roman austerity was read into the Stoic system, and Stoicism became a popular creed among the educated classes. Seneca (4 B.C.—A.D. 65), who was Nero's prime minister, and the Emperor Marcus Aurelius both were eminent Stoics, as was the former slave Epictetus, who flourished about A.D. 90. Many of the great jurisconsults of the first two centuries professed Stoicism, and in a way Roman law may be described as a formulation of Stoic ideals of justice and right.

**Roman
Stoicism**

Emperor worship was not an integral part of Rome's religious system, yet it deserves brief notice here. It too was a contribution of the Greeks to Rome. Alexander the Great had demanded and

**Emperor
worship
un-Roman**



PANTHEON. This building, the oldest in Rome that is still in use, was first built in 27 B.C. by Augustus' friend and right-hand man, Marcus Agrippa, as is indicated by the inscription over the door: *M. Grippa, L[ucii] f[ilius], cos. tertium fecit*—"Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, built this during his third consulship." The building was struck by lightning in A.D. 110 and rebuilt by Hadrian about 16 years later. It became a Christian church in A.D. 609, and in the nineteenth century it was made a national monument and the burial place of the kings of Italy. This view shows the Pantheon much as it was after Hadrian's reconstruction, except for a frieze and other decorations that have been removed. The building probably carried the name *Pantheon* from the first, and was dedicated by Agrippa to "all the gods." (Galloway)

received divine honors from his Greek subjects, and the practice had been continued by many of his Hellenistic successors, but the idea of a divine ruler remained abhorrent to Romans down to the end of the Republican period. Greeks and Orientals sometimes erected altars to Roman generals, either by way of flattery or out of sincere gratitude, and occasional Romans may have demanded such honors in the East in order to have something to crow about at home, but true Romans never honored men in such a way. Caesar's enemies accused him of planning to set himself up as a divine monarch, but the charge was most improbable: he was politician enough to know that such a step would arouse bitter resentment and that it could bring him no compensating benefit. Moreover, what reason

had the great Caesar to envy the status of the two most conspicuous divine monarchs of his day—his mistress Cleopatra and her contemptible father, Ptolemy Auletes, whom everybody had pushed around?

Nevertheless, after Caesar's death the obsequious senate declared him a god—the *divus Julius*—and set up a college of priests, under the chairmanship of Mark Antony, to preside over his worship. Similar honors were ordered for Augustus after his death, and presently it became customary to do the same for every emperor after death. Caligula and Nero, the only two of the Julio-Claudians who were direct descendants of Augustus, demanded divine honors while they were still alive—in part, perhaps, to advertise the fact that their Claudian rivals (Tiberius and Claudius) lacked such divine ancestry. Domitian too demanded divine honors during his last years. In the third century, when new ideas were arising on every hand, and religion was permeating every phase of life, the emperors laid greater emphasis upon their divinity. In fact, everything about the government became sacred, and the word *sacra* ("sacred") became virtually synonymous with "imperial." Officials spoke of "sacred" decrees, the "sacred" palace, and even of "sacred" coinage. In the final analysis, however, all this talk about a "divine" emperor and "sacred" institutions was merely an expression of imperial patriotism, sometimes sincere and sometimes exacted by force.

**Roman
emperors
as gods**

14. HARBINGERS OF DECLINE

*Peace and
prosperity
not enough*

THE Roman Empire brought peace and prosperity to the Mediterranean world, which it governed intelligently and humanely for many years. It bestowed material blessings and economic liberty to an unprecedented degree. Not until modern times did so many people again participate in so high a level of material well-being. Yet peace, prosperity, and humanitarianism were not enough. The old city-states may not have been able to assure these blessings adequately, yet they provided others which the Roman Empire lacked. The city-state had been a rather small, closely knit community in which every free man had his place as a citizen: perhaps this place was not a very glamorous one, but at least it was his, and he felt at home in it. He was an active citizen, and when he rendered his minor services to the state, he felt a heightened interest in public affairs. The community provided him with heroes to emulate, with something to be proud of. In the long run, intangibles such as these are even more important in making a state healthy than is material prosperity, but Rome's imperial rulers could not provide them for the heterogeneous millions over whom they ruled.

*Decline
of public
spirit*

In the first place, the governing bureaucracy left too many people with no share in their government. This honest and well-trained bureaucracy, which performed its tasks more efficiently than they had ever been performed before, accepted young men of the middle and upper classes from all parts of the Empire, but once these recruits had entered the bureaucracy, they formed a caste which conducted imperial affairs as it saw fit. During the first century, the cities of the Empire continued to look after local matters, and citizens

retained a pride in their local government. Election slogans painted on the walls of Pompeii (which was buried in A.D. 79) show that political life there was far from stagnant and that citizens eagerly sought municipal office. In the second century, the imperial bureaucrats assumed more and more of the tasks of local government, presumably because they performed them more efficiently than their elected colleagues could. Little remained for the old officials to do, and in the third century it became difficult to persuade men to accept municipal office because of the loss of time and money involved.

In the second place, the spirit of the Empire, like that of the Republic, was highly aristocratic. The old Republican aristocracy had been liquidated, however, and replaced by another in the early days of the Empire. This new cosmopolitan aristocracy had little sympathy with the principles and ideals of the old Republican patricians. Many of the new aristocrats were descended, only a few generations back, from the slaves brought to Italy by Roman conquerors; others were Greeks and Orientals whose ancestors had come of their own accord; and though these men neither appreciated nor understood the old Rome, they gave society a new tone. Rome likewise brought a new social order to the provinces. During the conquests she declared it her policy to cooperate with the "best" elements in provincial society—by which, of course, she meant those who were quickest to welcome her. The old aristocrats were pushed aside, and their places were taken by men who had prospered financially during the years of turmoil, who were little inclined to perpetuate the cultural traditions of their own people, and who made little effort to understand Rome's cultural traditions.

At the same time millions of other persons were being torn from their ancestral homes and their cultural roots to migrate, voluntarily or involuntarily, to the great cities and especially to Rome. Lacking the skill, energy, or luck of their more fortunate fellows, they sank into the urban proletariat. As the imperial government feared and forbade minor social organizations—on the order of our modern churches, lodges, and unions—these displaced persons found few opportunities to make friends in their new homes. Perhaps their economic status improved slightly, but socially and culturally they led the lives of lost dogs. This city proletariat was rarely rebellious, but neither was it enthusiastic about the Empire or anything else. In the end, it played a considerable part in the political, cultural, and religious revolution that overthrew the Roman Empire.

*Old
traditions
ignored by
new leaders*

*Displaced
persons*

Superstition and "the Failure of Nerve"

**Reason
replaced
by magic**

One of the most distressing signs of the new day was a great growth of superstition. Judged by modern standards, nearly everyone in antiquity was superstitious, and only the intellectual upper classes achieved a rational view of the world. In the period under discussion, however, as the old civilization was fading away, superstitions of many sorts increased at an appalling rate. Astrologers, magicians, dream interpreters, prophets, and other fakirs appeared everywhere and were consulted by an eager public; intelligent men lived in dread of dreams and charms; spells and incantations were believed to work wonders; holy men were reputed to cure the sick and raise the dead. Even educated persons came to believe such things, and people everywhere seemed to turn their backs upon the rational view of the world that their forefathers had built up so arduously and so painfully over the centuries. Men of the upper classes had once regarded the world coolly, courageously, and with a high degree of self-confidence; now they trembled at the very thought of spirits and spooks, sought the aid of magicians and sorcerers, and hailed astrology as the queen of the sciences. A modern scholar once brilliantly defined this age as one characterized above all else by "the failure of nerve."

**Magic
not new**

This alarming phenomenon merits our careful attention. In the first place, it must be borne in mind that the men who shared and propagated these superstitions were not the blood descendants of Aristotle and Hippocrates, Cato and Cicero, Lucretius and Horace: the families of those ancients, and the social class to which they belonged, had long since vanished. The actual ancestors of the intellectual leaders of the new superstition had then been very humble persons, uneducated and undoubtedly as superstitious as any of their descendants. Perhaps the enlightened upper classes of former times had dispelled superstition somewhat, but more probably they merely drove it under cover. At any rate, when the former upper classes lost control, old superstitions quickly blossomed anew.

**Social
upheavals
and
fatalism**

Moreover, the military conquests of the first century before Christ were accompanied by sudden and extreme changes of fortune, which repeatedly raised favored individuals to a brief day of glory and then hurled them down again for no apparent reason. Such inexplicable events strengthened ancient beliefs that the world is dominated by invisible powers whose actions the sorcerer can control and the

astrologer predict. The political, social, and intellectual leaders of the new day were men who had risen from the chaos of the first century before Christ, and their new grandeur lent weight, in their own eyes and in those of their contemporaries, to the old beliefs about unseen powers at work in the world. When troubled times returned, in the third century, the peoples of the Empire descended to new depths of superstition. The mind of the ancient world had collapsed.

Another aspect of the failure of imperial Rome may be seen in her educational system. There were more schools in the second century than ever before, better financed and more widely attended, but still they reached only the upper classes, and the education they imparted was largely aristocratic, largely literary, and largely out of date. Young men in the West studied the Latin classics and were taught to write Ciceronian Latin; in the East they studied the Greek classics and learned to declaim in Attic Greek. The study of literary masterpieces was largely grammatical while the essays and declamations were devoid of intellectual content. Advanced pupils might be given a smattering of logic and an attenuated version of the Stoic or Platonic philosophy, but only in the law schools, where prospective bureaucrats were trained, did instruction lead to anything; elsewhere it seemed designed to set the pupil apart from the world he lived in. The schools may have tried to preserve and pass on to the next generation the great cultural traditions of earlier times, but this traditional city-state culture was so out of harmony with the life of the new cosmopolitan world that no one could make it seem very important. Discouraged schoolmasters therefore allowed themselves and their subject to drop into barren scholasticism. The fault was not wholly with the schools. Rome was losing her ancient ability to absorb foreign peoples and foreign ideas. She lost even the ability to train her own people along the old lines, and the old Roman way of life had ceased to exist.

Rome's imperial authorities had created an efficient government, they had won the allegiance of the middle and upper classes by providing general economic prosperity, but they could not transmute their empire into a spiritual community in which all men participated and to which all were ardently loyal. The imperial idealists of the Augustan Age, men like Vergil and Livy, were too narrowly Roman to be acceptable to the non-Roman or at least to the non-Italian peoples of the Empire. They still thought that a

*Failure
of the old
education*

*Spiritual
bankruptcy*

small group of Romans should rule the world, and the heroes they idealized were local heroes, foreign to most citizens of the Roman Empire. What could Aeneas, or Scipio Africanus, or even the great Julius Caesar, mean to the peasant of Spain, or Agamemnon to the urban proletarian of Antioch? Or, for that matter, what did these heroes mean to the second-century proletarian of Rome itself? Vergil and Livy were outmoded for most people, but no new writers arose to take their place. Tacitus, Juvenal, and Lucian could only say "No," becoming indignant or cynical about what they saw in the world about them. Neither they nor any of their contemporaries could find anything important of which they approved. Yet until men found positive hopes and aspirations upon which they could agree, they could create no great literature or art, and there could be no world civilization. There could not even be a stable government.

POLITICAL DECLINE

*The
Severi
(193-235)*

Things were going so badly in the last years of Marcus Aurelius (161-180) that the unhappy emperor was forced to fortify his courage by constantly invoking the consolations of Stoic philosophy. During his last military campaign on the northern frontier he composed his famous *Meditations*, maintaining that a true philosopher will preserve a steady calm and keep a stiff upper lip through all the bludgeonings of Fate. Marcus's incompetent son Commodus, weighed down by tasks greater than he could perform, sought refuge in drunkenness, riotous living, and the society of gladiators. When he was murdered (192), the praetorian guard named and quickly murdered two minor emperors, and in 193 a soldier named Septimius Severus took over the Empire. An able man, Septimius restored order and effected many reforms during his reign of eighteen years. He was succeeded by two sons, and later by two of his wife's nephews, all of whom were young and inexperienced, and none of whom had any ability. Competent ministers managed to keep the political machine going, and to maintain outward appearances, but everything was changing rapidly in the days of the Severi, and when the last member of the dynasty was murdered (235), Rome's decline took on new and catastrophic proportions.

*Fifty years
of confusion
(235-284)*

During the next fifty years the Roman Empire suffered under twenty emperors, nearly all of whom were creatures of the army and only one of whom died a natural death. They are often called

the "barrack-room emperors" because of their origin and military support. Moreover, these twenty men were only the official emperors, formally recognized as such by the senate. Many other ambitious men, also enjoying the support of armies, claimed the Empire and some actually held considerable parts of it. We have no complete list of these pretenders and usurpers, but there must have been well over a hundred persons whom somebody recognized as emperor during this chaotic half-century. Not until Diocletian (284-305) became emperor did the Roman world again enjoy a strong central government.

The struggles of these short-lived emperors tore the Empire to pieces, with one disaster following another in rapid succession. The emperor rarely had time to do more than secure his own position. His armies lived off the land and wrought incalculable damage, sometimes getting out of hand and sacking whole cities. As the government could no longer provide adequate police protection, brigandage and piracy again became rife, and some of the emperors or usurpers were little more than superbrigands themselves. Local leaders then undertook to provide security for their communities, and the more successful of them were presently in a position to ignore or defy the central government. In case of attack by brigands or soldiers, their fortified villas provided refuges for neighboring farmers, who paid for the service by working part time on their protector's lands. From this system it was only a step to medieval knights and castles, manors, serfs, and feudalism.

These ephemeral emperors faced almost insuperable financial difficulties. They had to pay their armies regularly, yet they always found it difficult to collect taxes. Everyone knew that a new emperor might soon arise, that he might not recognize payments made to his predecessor, and that he might even choose to regard such payments as evidence of treasonable support of a usurper. The emperors were forced to widespread confiscation of property (often on trumped-up charges of treason) and to the debasement of the currency by reducing the amount of the precious metals in coins. Wild inflation followed, until all money became virtually worthless. Men returned to primitive barter. The inflation of course had disastrous effects upon the whole economic life of the Empire, ruining countless persons of the middle and upper classes, reducing the poor to the most abject conditions, and raising up a new aristocracy of lucky speculators.

*Failure of
government*

Bankruptcy

**The Empire
falling to
pieces**

When the emperors were harassed by problems such as these, they found neither the time nor the money to continue the old programs of public works, or even to keep up those already in operation. Roads, bridges, aqueducts were allowed to fall into ruin. The communication system of the Empire disintegrated, and the damage was increased by the growing menace of brigands and pirates. Trade and commerce declined, and with the severing of its economic bonds the Empire itself began falling to pieces. Large and small areas became economically self-sufficient, and the imperial authorities found it impossible to concentrate forces against usurpers. Thus all Gaul was ruled for fourteen years by two successive usurpers (260-274) who for a while were also recognized in Britain, Spain, and parts of northern Italy. It would be a grave error, however, to consider such usurpers the leaders of nationalistic revolts: they dreamed of ruling the whole Empire and insisted that the emperors at Rome were the real traitors and usurpers.

**Declining
population**

At this time, too, there was a great decline in the population of the Empire. In the days of Antoninus Pius (c. A.D. 150) the Empire supported more than 100 million inhabitants; a century and a third later Dioeletian found barely half that number. Some of this decline was due to war and massacre, much of it to a series of devastating plagues, some of it to starvation or diseases aggravated by malnutrition, some of it to deliberate race suicide. Declining population brought contracting markets everywhere and thus delivered another blow to the shattered economic system. These distressing symptoms of social and economic decay appeared in all parts of the Empire, but they were especially noticeable in the Latin West. Commerce and industry continued at a relaxed pace in the East, but Rome's western provinces entered upon an economic depression from which they never recovered.

**Wars with
Persia**

The third century also saw a revival of warfare along the frontiers of the Empire. The Parthians had caused Rome little trouble in the second century, and a native rebellion overthrew their dynasty in 226. The Third Persian Empire, ruled by a new dynasty (the Sassanians) then embarked upon an aggressive foreign policy. Persian raiders frequently entered the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, and had it not been for the brutality and rapacity they showed against Romans, Greeks, and Orientals alike, they might have found valuable friends and allies among Rome's oriental subjects. At first

the Roman armies held their own against the Persians, but one of the twenty emperors (Valerian) was captured in 259 and died a prisoner in Persia. The Romans were presently forced to draw back their outposts, but the Persians could not extend their power to the Mediterranean. For the next four centuries war between the two powers was chronic, a running sore in the side of the Empire.

The peoples beyond the Rhine and the Danube were likewise restless in the third century. In the days of Marcus Aurelius, a Germanic tribe broke across the frontier and forced him to spend much of his time fighting in the north, but for more than half a century thereafter this frontier saw no further serious trouble. Toward the middle of the third century, however, raids were resumed. When Diocletian seized power in 284, therefore, he found the Empire torn by internal dissention, several provinces in the hands of usurpers, a disastrous war in progress with the Persians, and Germanic tribesmen raiding Roman territory almost at will. Men had begun to fear that the days of Rome's mighty empire were numbered.

**Germanic
invasions**

At first glance Diocletian seemed to be just another barraek-room emperor, indistinguishable from his predecessors, but within a short time he had checked the major forces that were rushing the Empire to destruction. He made peace with Persia and crushed various usurpers. Realizing that one man could not adequately command the whole frontier and rule the provinces as well, he made a trusted friend joint emperor with himself, and to assure a peaceful succession he and this colleague each adopted a general as heir. The two emperors were called Augusti, the two heirs, Caesars. A section of the frontier and various provinces were assigned to each, but the four men ruled jointly, and this innovation was in no sense a partitioning of the Empire. Diocletian next turned to domestic reform, and presently the Empire was once more economically on its feet. Diocletian was not a radical innovator, and he had precedent for most of his reforms, yet in the end his empire differed fundamentally from that of the first two centuries. It had become a military autocracy that went far toward regimenting the entire population. Perhaps these extreme measures were necessary in order to stop the anarchy of the preceding fifty years, but they left the Empire an oriental despotism. Many centuries were to pass before the Western world again enjoyed the relative freedom of the early Roman Empire.

Diocletian

*Constantine and His Dynasty***Constantine**

For twenty years Diocletian governed the Roman Empire, saving it from threatened dissolution, but at last the tired and discouraged old man decided to retire (May 1, 305). His colleague, or Augustus, resigned with him and, as had been arranged long before, the two Caesars automatically became Augusti. Troubles then began anew. One of the new Augusti named two friends as Caesars, thereby offending various others who coveted the position. Armies proclaimed two disappointed candidates Caesars and later hailed them as Augusti. Still others entered the fray, until a total of eight men had claimed to be Augusti: two died soon after, but from 307 to 310 the Roman world had six rival emperors. At first the rivals engaged in little actual warfare, but major battles in 312 and 313 left only two Augusti, Licinius in the East and Constantine in the West. Licinius was eliminated in 324, and thereafter Constantine was sole emperor until his death in 337.

**A revolutionary
usurper**

This Constantine is famous as Rome's first Christian emperor, but his importance reached into many other fields as well. He, rather than Diocletian, deserves to be called the creator of a new Roman Empire. Diocletian was fundamentally a conservative man, but Constantine was a revolutionist with little respect for old Roman traditions, partly because he knew them so imperfectly. Moreover he had many reasons to hate Diocletian and his system. His father, Constantius, had been one of Diocletian's Caesars. His mother, Helena, once a servant in a tavern, had run away with the young soldier long before anyone suspected the brilliant future that lay before him. Several years later, when Constantius began to rise politically, he discarded his concubine to marry the stepdaughter of the second Augustus. The young Constantine and his mother were then held at Diocletian's court, where they were subjected to frequent insult by Constantius's legitimate children and their flunkies. When a rival was named Caesar in 305, Constantine rose in revolt. He was a man of great energy and will power, grossly superstitious, and so badly educated that he could scarcely speak Latin correctly. His insatiable ambition lifted him above all moral scruples. He ordered his father-in-law to commit suicide; he caused the death of his brother-in-law (Licinius) after promising to spare him; he murdered his wife and his eldest son. Constantine was determined to rule the world, no matter what the cost to others might be.



CONSTANTINE. (Conservatori Museum, Rome)

**Constanti-
nople (330)**

Among Constantine's significant achievements was the transference of the capital of the Empire from Rome to Constantinople, the city on the Bosphorus which long bore his name. Rome had long since ceased to be capital of the Empire in more than name, and it was not even the capital of Italy after Diocletian established the residence of the second Augustus at Milan. The economic center of the Empire having shifted eastward during the third century, the seat of government was bound to follow. Diocletian established his principal residence at Nicomedia in Asia Minor, some fifty miles from Constantinople. Constantine preferred the site of the ancient Byzantium, on the European side of the Bosphorus, where Europe and Asia meet, and here he formally dedicated his new capital in 330. Here he resided during his last years, an absolute monarch surrounded by oriental pomp, flattery, and intrigue. He was served by an enormous bureaucracy that was both proud and oppressive; the people were regimented as never before: a veritable army of spies reported the slightest signs of disaffection; and all was sanctified in the name of religion. Following the example of several predecessors during the third century, Constantine proclaimed himself the harbinger of a new day, and in his case the claim was justified. He was the founder of the political and social system that we call Byzantine. In the next chapter we shall discuss his relations with Christianity, and another chapter will sketch the main features of the Byzantine system.

**Constantine's
successors
(337-395)**

Constantine died in 337 and, after a series of bloody murders had eliminated most of his relatives, his three young sons—Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans—inherited the Empire, each of them looking after one of its parts. Constantine II, the eldest, was killed in 340, and the two remaining brothers ruled in East and West respectively. After the death of Constans (350), Constantius II ruled alone until his death in 361. He was succeeded by a nephew of the great Constantine, Julian (361-363), who is often called "the Apostate" because, though brought up a Christian, he reverted to paganism. When Julian lost his life during a military campaign against the Persians, the cruel and bloody dynasty of Constantine came to an end, having ruled for fifty crucial years. The next thirty years saw a series of lesser emperors, the last of whom was Theodosius I (379-395). Being convinced that the Empire could no longer be governed by one central authority, Theodosius divided it between his two sons, allotting the East to Arcadius, the West to Honorius. Since Theodosius was the last emperor to rule both East and West, many



ROMAN FORUM TODAY. (Galloway)

historians have regarded his death in 395 as the end of the Roman Empire.

This fourth century might be called the Indian summer of the Empire. When the reforms of Diocletian and Constantine put an end to the disastrous calamities of the third century, conditions began to improve perceptibly, especially in the East. Brigandage and piracy were reduced; a new and fairly stable currency was established; there was even a faint revival of pagan literature, both Greek and Latin. As we shall see in the next chapter, Christianity made rapid progress during this fourth century. But the dominant classes in the Empire, including Constantine himself, were the sons of men who had risen to affluence during the chaotic third century, often by plundering the estates of the wealthy. They were a ruthless and relentless group, who encouraged the emperors in their despotism. And as the government's only answer to the troubles of the day was increased regimentation and the multiplication of rapacious officials, a sullen

*Indian
summer of
the Empire*

opposition arose among the people which prepared the way for the culminating disasters of the fifth century.

Barbarian Invasions

**The Empire
a hollow
shell**

Popular opinion ordinarily attributes the "fall of Rome" to the invasion of the Empire by Germanic barbarians from the north, but recent historians assign only secondary importance to these spectacular events. The invaders were few in number, they entered an empire long since debilitated by internal decay, and the imperial authorities scarcely offered them even token resistance. The Roman Empire was a hollow shell long before the barbarians crashed in. Nevertheless, the invasions actually took place, and the invaders turned the course of European history into new channels. They therefore deserve our brief attention, even though they form only an appendix to our story of ancient civilization and its decline.

**Germans
in the
Empire**

Germans had been entering the Empire ever since the days of Julius Caesar. At first they were brought as slaves, but in the second century individuals and small groups voluntarily became agricultural laborers in the western provinces. Emperors and usurpers in the third century often hired Germans as mercenary soldiers. In earlier times Germans had occasionally served as auxiliaries in the Roman army, but being few in number they were soon lost among the provincials. Now ambitious Roman generals hired large bands of Germans, commanded by their own officers, to fight against rival Roman armies. In the fourth century barbarian raids became fairly frequent along the Rhine-Danube frontier, and though the Roman legions were still able to drive the invaders out, Constantine and his successors sometimes found it cheaper to buy them off with gifts of land. The great invasions of the fifth century therefore were not absolutely new.

**Gothic
invasions**

The Goths were the first Germanic people since the days of Augustus to win a major victory over Roman legions. These Goths had once lived in northern Germany and Sweden, but in the third century they began to migrate southward, perhaps because of pressure from other peoples then forcing their way into northern and eastern Europe from Asia. Presently they separated into two groups, known as East and West Goths, or Ostrogoths and Visigoths. The Ostrogoths moved into southern Russia, but in 376 a large body of Visigoths crossed the Danube to enter the Roman Empire. Two

years later they defeated a Roman army at Adrianople less than 150 miles from Constantinople, and killed the emperor himself. The new emperor (Theodosius I) pacified them by giving them land and distinguishing them by the honorable name of allies, but on his death (395) trouble again broke out. Under a leader named Alaric they ravaged Greece and made an alliance with the western emperor (Honorius) after receiving lands in Illyria (now Yugoslavia).

Ten years later Alaric invaded Italy, demanded more land, and, when refused, marched on Rome. He easily entered and sacked the city (August, 410), but he withdrew after three days. A few weeks later Alaric died in southern Italy. His army advanced into southern Gaul, where its new leader married Honorius's daughter. This sacking of the "Eternal City" sent a shudder through the whole Roman Empire, but the imperial authorities could do nothing. The events of 410 remained a vain warning of worse to follow.

**Rome
sacked by
Visigoths
(410)**

At the very end of 406, armies of another Germanic tribe, the Vandals, had crossed the Rhine into Gaul, which they looted to their hearts' content—whence our word "vandalism." After a few years they entered Spain, and in 429 they crossed to North Africa. Though they numbered only eighty thousand, including women and children, they easily occupied that region as far as Carthage. A generation later the Vandals invaded Italy by sea and sacked Rome itself (455).

Vandals

Meantime other Germans had been crossing the Rhine into Gaul. The Franks established themselves in Belgium and northern France; the Alemanni (whence the word *Allemand*, still used by the French for all Germans) settled in Alsace; the Burgundians occupied the Rhone Valley; and a few years later the Visigoths followed the Vandals into Spain. The last Roman legions had been withdrawn from Britain early in the century, after which much of the island was occupied by Germanic invaders, the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes. The most terrible of the invaders, however, was Attila the Hun, sometimes called "the scourge of God." The Huns had entered Europe from Asia in the fourth century and had been employed at times as mercenaries by the eastern emperor. Attila invaded Gaul in 451, wreaking terrific damage, but he was defeated near Orléans by an army of Romans and Germans. The next year he invaded Italy from the northeast, but he withdrew again before his death in 453. The Huns presently returned to Asia, but the Germans remained to dominate Britain, Gaul, Spain, and North Africa. Though their leaders

**Germans
and Huns**

THE ROMAN EMPIRE ABOUT 500 A.D.

— Western Kingdoms
- - - Eastern Roman Empire



sometimes accepted honorary titles from the emperor at Constantinople, they actually governed as they saw fit.

Early in the fifth century the residence of the western emperor had been moved from Milan to Ravenna—a coastal city on the northern Adriatic about fifty miles south of the modern Venice. This city, now famous for its Byzantine churches and mosaics, became the scene of the death agonies of the western Empire. Here a German general named Ricimer made and unmade five puppet emperors and actually governed Italy from 455 to 472. He was succeeded by another German, named Orestes, who in 475 put his twelve-year-old son, Romulus, on the throne. This boy—contemptuously called Romulus Augustulus, the “little Augustus”—was the last Roman emperor of the West, for a year later a band of German mercenaries slew Orestes, banished Romulus, and crowned their own leader Odoacer (476). Some historians use this date 476 to mark the end of the ancient world.

*Death
agonies of
the Empire*

Odoacer ruled Italy until he was murdered in 493. Power then passed to Theodoric, a leader of the Ostrogoths, whom the authorities at Constantinople had sent to regain Italy for the Empire. Theodoric preferred to rule in his own name from Ravenna, and his Ostrogothic kingdom of Italy survived for about sixty years. The Byzantine Emperor Justinian (527–565) regained most of Italy toward the middle of the century, but not long after his death a Germanic tribe known as the Lombards overran much of the peninsula. A Lombard king then ruled northern Italy, and various Lombard dukes held large parts of central and southern Italy. The coast lands, and a strip from Rome to Ravenna, were still ruled nominally from Constantinople, actually by an official known as the “exarch” at Ravenna.

*Ostrogoths
in power*

These various invasions were accompanied by great disorder and by much wanton destruction. Civilization reached its lowest ebb in the days of the Lombards, and, had it not been for the Christian Church, arts and letters might have perished utterly in the West. We must therefore turn our attention to the story of early Christianity, examining among other things its share in preserving ancient civilization and its contributions to that civilization.

*The end of
the ancient
world*

VI

Catacomb of Calixtus



CHRISTIANITY

RELIGION IN THE LATER EMPIRE—
EARLY CHRISTIANITY—CHRISTIANITY TRIUMPHANT

B.C. A.D.	Judaism: Political	Judaism: Religious	Christianity	Paganism
167	Judas Maccabaeus			Cybele at Rome (206) Bacchanalia forbidden (186)
135	Jewish Kingdom	Pharisees Sadducees Essenes		Isis at Rome (139)
63	Pompey enters Jerusalem	Dead Sea Scrolls		Mithra at Rome (60) Lucretius (d. 53) Cult of Caesar (44)
37-4 B.C.	Herod the Great	Hillel (d. A.D. 9)	Jesus (b. 4 B.C.)	
A.D. 6	Judas of Galilee	Gomaliel I (d. 50)		
6-41	Roman Procurators	Philo (d. 40)	Crucifixion (30) Conversion of Paul	
26-36	Pontius Pilate	"Messiahs" appear	Execution of James	Clodius reforms Cybele worship
40	Caligula's Statue			
41-44	Herod Agrippa			
44-66	Procurators		Paul's missionary journeys and Epistles Gospels of Mark and Luke Nero executes Christians (64) Deaths of Peter and Paul (67)	Seneca (d. 65)
66-70	Jewish War		Gospels of Matthew and John	
70	Destruction of Jerusalem	Gomaliel II (d. 115)		
96			Apocalypse of John	Domitian Dominus et Deus Pliny's letter (113)
115	Jewish revolt			
135	Bar Kokba's revolt			

A.D.	Roman Empire	Christianity	Paganism
193-235	Severi usually well disposed	Christian apologists and theologians: Origen (d. 253), Tertullian (d. 230)	Increasing superstition Active quest for new religions: success of Mithra and Sol Invictus "Failure of Nerve"
249-251	Decius	First great persecution	
253-259	Valerian	Persecution: Cyprian (d. 258)	
260-303		Forty years peace	
303-311		Diocletian's persecution	
312-337	Constantine	First Christian emperor	
325		Council of Nicaea: Eusebius (d. 340) Athonasius (d. 373)	
361-363	Julian the Apostate		Reforms pagan worship
367-383	Graftian		Refuses title <i>Pontifex Maximus</i>
379-395	Theodosius	Christianity made official religion of the Roman Empire: Ambrase (d. 397); Jerome (d. 420) Augustine (d. 430); Benedict (d. 543)	Paganism outlawed: Christians use strong-arm methods to destroy it

15. RELIGION IN THE LATER EMPIRE

THE Roman Empire brought peace and manifold blessings of a material sort to its diverse subjects but it failed to create an intellectual and cultural system that made men feel at home in their new world. Among its characteristic social products were many persons who, by forsaking their ancestral villages to seek new homes in the cities, had voluntarily or involuntarily torn themselves away from their ancient cultural communities and their cultural heritage. In their native villages these people had lived among lifelong friends and neighbors, with whom they coöperated in countless enterprises, and with these fellow villagers they shared a philosophy or view of the world that supplied moderately satisfactory answers to the great problems of life and death. All this they lost when they migrated to the cities. They became culturally disinherited outcasts who sadly learned that heightened economic prosperity was no adequate substitute for the pleasant intangibles they had enjoyed at home. Only the hardier and more robust among them could lightly forgo the old philosophy that had once made life seem worth while. Even prosperous persons still hungered for closer human companionship and vaguely sought new philosophies to explain life and the world, while their less fortunate fellows soon dropped into pathetic ignorance, superstition, and hopelessness. What men needed above all else was something worth living for, but Rome gave them only peace and economic prosperity, free bread for the poor, and the brutalizing gladiatorial combats of the amphitheater. Such blessings, pleasant as they might be, were not enough, even for those who were accustomed to being underprivileged.

*Spiritually
displaced
persons*

**Religious
cults under
the Empire**

As religion seemed to offer these cultural waifs an escape from the humdrum of their daily lives, their quest for an adequate religious faith became one of the more engrossing aspects of life under the Empire. Countless new and exotic cults appeared. These religions differed widely among themselves, some attracting the poor and the ignorant, others appealing to the more privileged classes, yet they all differed widely from the traditional worship of Greece and Rome. Their rituals stood in colorful contrast to the dull formality of the state cults, and their doctrines promised the faithful a blessed immortality in a heaven whose joys would adequately compensate them for the dreariness and suffering of this world. They provided the hope that was so sadly lacking among the peoples of the Roman Empire.

**Ex oriente
lux**

These new religions were largely of oriental origin. They began to appear in Rome and the West during the last century of the Republic, but at first they attracted only foreigners sojourning there. Under the Empire, however, all sorts of persons turned to the new religions. The intensity of this religious quest rose with the passing of time, until the catastrophes of the third century shattered the old scheme of things and set all men to seeking new supernatural assurances and comforts. After the days of the Severi (193-235) men looked more and more frequently to the East for their guides and certainties. *Ex oriente lux*, they used to say, or "From the East, Light." The new religions which then became popular throughout the Empire are called the oriental mysteries.

THE ORIENTAL MYSTERY RELIGIONS

Cybele

The first oriental cult to reach Rome was the worship of Cybele, also known as the Magna Mater ("Great Mother") or the Mother of the Gods. In the last years of the war against Hannibal, when Rome was frantically seeking any available help, human or divine, someone discovered an old prophecy predicting that she would win the war if this goddess were worshiped in Rome. In 205 B.C. Scipio Africanus arranged to have a famous statue of Cybele (apparently a large meteorite, shaped something like a woman) brought from its shrine in Asia Minor and set up in the city. After the defeat of Hannibal had proved the prowess of the new goddess, a splendid temple was erected to her on the Palatine Hill. Nevertheless, the Romans were sadly disappointed in their new acquisition, for her

cult outraged their deep sense of decorum. This worship was conducted by brightly clad eunuch priests, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals, strange singing, and exotic dances. Had this disorderly goddess not been protected by the powerful Scipio family, she might well have been hustled back to Asia. But as a formal decree of the senate had brought her to Rome, she enjoyed a legal status in the city and was allowed to remain. She exercised little influence upon Rome's religious life, however, until about A.D. 50, when the Emperor Claudius reformed her cult, bringing it into closer conformity with Roman ideas as to how a goddess should be worshiped. Thereafter Cybele received more respectful attention.

Meantime other oriental religions had appeared in the capital. Toward the end of the second century before Christ, merchants from Egypt set up the cults of Isis and Serapis. A temple to Isis was presently built in Rome. On four occasions between 58 and 48 B.C. the senate ordered it closed, but in every case it was soon reopened. The wars against Cleopatra, who had proclaimed herself an incarnation of Isis, again brought the goddess into disrepute; her priests were in trouble once more under Tiberius; but Caligula gave them official recognition about A.D. 40. When the temple to Serapis at Rome was destroyed by fire, about A.D. 90, the Emperor Domitian replaced it with a magnificent new structure at public expense. More than any other of the oriental gods and goddesses, Isis made her appeal to the upper classes, and she was one of the last to go after the victory of Christianity.

*Isis and
Serapis*

The worship of the god Mithra was introduced into Rome about 60 B.C. by Pompey's soldiers, who had learned to revere him in Asia Minor during the great war against his servant, Mithridates. Mithra was an old Persian deity whose worshipers retained much of the Zoroastrian theology. He was especially popular with the army, and his temples have been found in scores of army camps from Britain and Germany to Syria and North Africa. Other Mithraic temples have been found in Rome and the vicinity, and in many other cities. In the third century Mithraism was perhaps the most popular oriental religion in the Roman Empire.

Mithra

These great religions, as well as their countless minor rivals, all had developed out of old neolithic cults connected with the planting, growth, death, and revival of vegetation, but their ancient origins had long since been forgotten, and they came to the Roman world as a new revelation from the East. Their oriental mythology

*Their
revealed
theologies*



MITHRA. The slaying of a bull was the central event in Mithraic mythology in which the dog, the serpent, and the scorpion also played important parts. Mithraic temples usually showed some representation of this scene, just as Christians pictured the crucifixion in their churches. This relief was unearthed in Rome, in the ruins of a Mithraeum (temple to Mithra) on the Capitoline Hill, under the foundations of the present church of the Ara Coeli. Note the typically Persian caps worn by Mithra and the two torchbearers. The chorizontes above are the Sun (left) and the Moon (right), each preceded by a boy (Phosphorus and Hesperus, respectively). On the side of the bull are lightly carved the words, *Deo soli invicto Mithrae*—"To the god, the unconquered Sun, Mithra," followed by a date which may be A.D. 229. (Louvre)

attempted to explain the origin and workings of the universe, the nature and destiny of man, and the history of the religion in question. It spoke much of pollution and sin, and the cult provided impressive methods of purification. These religions also urged fasting and other ascetic practices. Their theologies centered about the old oriental myths of a god who had died and risen from the dead, thereby proving immortality, while the ceremonies of the cult, coming in the spring of the year when vegetation was springing up anew, recalled his glorious resurrection.

Though we have much evidence of the popularity of these religions in the Roman Empire, especially in the third century, it is quite impossible to estimate the number or percentage of persons attracted to them. A few rich women might be thrilled by the colorful and stately rites of Isis, but most worshipers of the new gods came from the new classes of society, especially Orientals who had migrated to the West. As the social status of these persons rose, especially under the Severi and later, their religions became more popular. By the time of Diocletian the new gods had won wide followings everywhere, and the government fostered them in countless ways. These religions were the most serious rivals of Christianity, and persons who like to speculate upon what would have happened in history, if only some great event had turned out differently, have sometimes wondered how different the Western world would be today if Mithraism instead of Christianity had won in the great struggle.

*Their
popularity*

Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism

Outside these great formal religions, whose history stretched back into hoary antiquity, there were countless wandering preachers who traveled from city to city, attracting disciples and preaching to anyone who would listen. These men usually called themselves philosophers. They belonged to no organized groups or schools, and each man had his own followers as well as his own doctrines. Some were Orientals, others had traveled and studied in the Orient (perhaps even in India), and still others merely professed to repeat traditional truths, but nearly all pointed to the Orient as the source of Light. Some were men of noble and saintly character, others were brazen impostors. One of the more famous was a certain Apollonius, born at Tyana in eastern Asia Minor, who flourished in the days of Nero and Vespasian and whose life was written, more than a century

*Preachers,
philoso-
phers,
missionaries*

later, by a philosopher living at the court of Severus Alexander. The satirist Lucian made fun of such philosophers in the second century, picturing them as humbugs and quacks, but we know that intelligent contemporaries had high regard for some of the men whom he thus pilloried. No doubt casual observers regarded the earlier Christian preachers as very similar to these philosophic missionaries.

Gnosticism

Out of this general commingling of theological and philosophical ideas in the early days of the Roman Empire arose a type of philosophy known as *gnosticism*. This new knowledge (the Greek word *gnosis* means "knowledge") was a vague and fluctuating hodgepodge of doctrines derived from the Greek and oriental mysteries, from Plato and the Stoics, from astrology, and even from Judaism and eventually from Christianity itself. It distinguished sharply between spirit and matter, God and the world, linking sin with matter and purity with spirit. It praised poverty, celibacy, and contempt of the world; it urged various ascetic practices; and it promised a "savior" who would free men from sin. To those who persevered in spiritual ways, thereby achieving "salvation," the gnostics promised the greatest boon of all—a blessed immortality. In the second and third centuries, many gnostics entered the Christian Church, and some Christians took up gnostic ideas, much to the distress of their fellow Christians (see page 270).

Plotinus

This reverence for, and misinterpretation of, the theories of Plato prepared the way for the last of the great pagan philosophies, Neo-Platonism. This school of philosophy was founded at Alexandria in Egypt, early in the third century, but its greatest exponent was Plotinus (204–270), who did most of his teaching at Rome. He was a man of great personal charm and of unforgettable personality, a saint, and a mystic who believed that he had once momentarily achieved perfect union with God. His most famous pupil, Porphyry (232–304), collected the master's writings, wrote his life, and published a learned attack upon Christianity. Neo-Platonism thereafter remained the leading pagan philosophy until its last school, at Athens, was closed by the Emperor Justinian in 529. The Neo-Platonists perpetuated the old gnostic distinction between matter and spirit, and they speculated abstrusely upon how a philosopher might escape from the former to the latter. Neo-Platonism was an otherworldly philosophy, attractive especially to the persons and social classes who were losers in the great social struggles of the day and who were therefore anxious to escape from the world. Nevertheless we

shall see that the intellectual leaders of the victorious Christians were indebted to it for many of their fundamental ideas about God, the World, and Man.

THE JEWS IN ROMAN TIMES

Judaism cannot rightly be numbered among the oriental mysteries, yet it was an oriental religion that profoundly influenced the religious history of the Roman Empire, in part directly and in part indirectly through Christianity. The religious history of the Jews in this period cannot be understood apart from their political history. We have already seen (on page 83) how Cyrus the Persian permitted many Jews to return to Jerusalem from their Exile in Babylonia (536 B.C.). Thousands took advantage of this permission and settled in Judea, where they set up a small theocratic state, governed by their high priests under the loose supervision of a distant Persian satrap. For two hundred years this tiny state continued in the obscure and peaceful tenor of its ways. After the death of Alexander the Great, Palestine fell to the Ptolemies and was governed from Egypt, but the political position of the Jews changed little from what it had been in Persian times. A century later, in 200 B.C., Antiochus III the Great seized Palestine and annexed it to the Seleucid empire, but again the change of higher rulers had little immediate effect upon the Jews.

*Postexilic
Jewish
state*

The overthrow of Antiochus at Magnesia (189 B.C.) gave new hope to Orientals throughout the Greek East, and they quickly began throwing off the yoke of the oppressor. Within a little more than a century, as we have seen (page 169), they had destroyed Greek power in the Near East, and, had not the Romans intervened, Orientals might again have ruled supreme in their part of the world. The Jews had their share in this Oriental revival, though rarely coöperating directly with their rebellious neighbors. Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-163), the last important king of the Seleucid line, inaugurated an extensive program of Hellenization in Palestine. At first he met with moderate success, but when he took over the Temple itself (167) he provoked revolt. The rebels were led by a certain Judas Maccabaeus, and after three years of fighting they compelled Antiochus to return the Temple and repeal various laws. Judas thus became a national hero in Israel and his exploits are still commemorated by pious Jews in the Feast of the Hanukkah observed every year in December. Judas was killed in 161, but his brothers

*Founding
the
Maccabean
kingdom*

continued the anti-Greek agitation until 135, when one of the family became an independent king (see page 83). At first he ruled only a small region around Jerusalem, but before 100 all Palestine had been conquered. This Maccabean state remained an independent monarchy until the coming of the Romans under Pompey in 63 B.C.

**Herod
the Great**

Two brothers were quarreling over the kingship of this Jewish state when Pompey arrived. He put one of the brothers on the throne, but real power went to his pro-Roman prime minister, an Arab named Antipater. This Antipater was the father of Herod the Great, whom Antony made king in 37. After Actium, Augustus ratified this appointment, and Herod continued to rule until his death in 4 B.C. Herod was a remarkable man, a thoroughly Westernized Oriental, who never forgot that his primary task was to retain the favor of the Romans. In this he was eminently successful, but though he officially adopted Judaism and married the daughter of the last of the Maccabean kings, the Jews always regarded Herod as a foreign oppressor.

**Destruction
of
Jerusalem
(A.D. 70)**

Rebellion broke out in Judea after Herod's death, and the Romans sent officials called "procurators" who governed the country around Jerusalem until A.D. 66. They always found the Jews hard to govern, however, and when rebellion broke out again in 66, the Romans decided upon a thorough pacification. Vespasian was sent to Palestine, but before he could complete his task, Nero was dead and Vespasian had turned his attention to becoming emperor. As soon as he had been recognized by the senate, in December, 69, he ordered his son Titus (the future emperor, whom he had left in command of the troops in Palestine) to conclude the Jewish War. In the spring of 70 Titus took Jerusalem by storm and destroyed the city. Palestine became a Roman province, ruled by a governor resident at Caesarea. On two subsequent occasions, in 115 and again in 135, there were bloody Jewish rebellions in Palestine, but each was suppressed by the Romans with great vigor.

**Jews in the
Diaspora**

Not all Jews lived in Palestine during these troubled years. Many had remained in Babylonia under the Persians, and in Parthian times they became an important section of Jewry. In the third century, thousands of Jews migrated from Palestine to Egypt, settling especially in Alexandria, where they formed a quarter or more of the population and where they were granted special privileges in the way of self-government under their own laws. Other Jews settled in Antioch, Tarsus, Ephesus, and other Greek cities, and before the



RELIEF FROM THE ARCH OF TITUS. This arch, still standing in the Forum at Rome, was erected in honor of Titus' capture and destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The relief shows the triumphal procession carrying the seven-branched candlestick, the table of show-bread, and other spoils from the Temple. The famous candlestick remained at Rome until the fifth century, when it was carried off by Alaric and lost.

end of the second century they had reached Rome and the West. In the first century after Christ there was a Jewish group in practically every important city of the Empire. These Jews outside Palestine were said to live in the *diaspora*, or "scattering."

Though there was a certain amount of anti-Semitism in the ancient world, the Roman government was not unfair to the Jews of the diaspora. Caesar and Augustus granted them important privileges, and the imperial authorities usually protected them from the fury of anti-Semitic mobs. The Jews of the diaspora repaid these favors with loyalty, and very few of them sympathized with the rebels of Palestine in 66-70. In the rebellions of 115 and 135, the Jews of Cyprus and Egypt took more conspicuous parts, for which they were punished severely by the Romans. In general, however, as soon as the imperial authorities were convinced of Jewish loyalty, they allowed the Jews to live in peace.

**Rome's
lenient
policy**

*Postexilic Judaism***Monotheism**

During their long years under Persian and Greek rule, the Jews of Palestine had greatly expanded their theological ideas. Thus they no longer merely insisted upon the strict monotheism taught by such prophets as Isaiah. They confidently expected that someday all men would worship this one true God in Jerusalem. This idea was often expressed by the later prophets, as when Malachi (c. 450) exclaimed, "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith Yahweh of hosts." Did the prophet mean to imply that already pagans were unwittingly offering sacrifices to the true God, or was he merely anticipating a time when all men would openly embrace Judaism? In either case, he clearly believed that the unity and universality of God implies one and the same worship for all mankind. The Hebrews thus surpassed even the Persians and the Stoic philosophers of their day in proclaiming the existence of only one God and the essential equality of all men before him.

**Devotion
to the Law**

The postexilic Jews also laid great emphasis upon the Law, as recorded in the Torah—or first five books of the Bible. Popularly believed to be the word of God himself delivered through the mouth of Moses, this Law served as foundation for the Jewish theocracy. The way of life it prescribed was followed, after a fashion, by nearly everyone in Palestine, where the whole Law could be observed without undue difficulty. The Jews of the diaspora, on the other hand, who were always a minority and sometimes a tiny minority in their communities, often found the "yoke of the Law" to be a grievous burden. In Roman times, when even the Palestinian Jews came into more frequent contact with Gentiles and many of them became somewhat Hellenized, they too sometimes wished to lighten this burden. Various interpretations of the Law then arose, some of them strict and some more liberal.

**Sadducees
and
Pharisees**

The party of the Sadducees, led by the high priests and composed largely of the well-to-do classes in the cities, were conservative in social and political matters but they tended to be liberal and urbane in interpreting the Law. After the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, however, this sect virtually ceased to exist. Their great rivals, the

Pharisees, were mostly Palestinian peasants, led by their rabbis or teachers. The most famous of these rabbis was Hillel (c. 60 B.C.–c. A.D. 10), who came from Babylon but lived in Palestine during the thirty years before the birth of Christ. He was enlightened and humane, but conservative theologically, and many of his teachings resembled those of the Gospels. Hillel's grandson, Gamaliel I (died c. A.D. 50), is mentioned in the New Testament as the teacher of St. Paul, and that man's grandson, Gamaliel II (died c. A.D. 115), took an important part in reorganizing Judaism after the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. Desiring to adhere strictly to the letter of the Law, the rabbis developed elaborate rules for interpreting the Scriptures, and their theological views were presently set forth in the Talmud. This huge collection of treatises, composed in the first five centuries of the Christian Era, became the intellectual foundation of medieval Judaism.

Ancient writers also speak of groups of pious Jews, called Essenes, who entered a monastic order and lived apart from other men, especially in the neighborhood of the Dead Sea. Part of each day they spent in working in the fields and part in studying the Scriptures or other religious books. They often thought and wrote about immortality, angels, and other matters not stressed in the older Judaism. One of the most exciting archeological finds in recent years came in 1947 when some Bedouin boys, exploring a cave near the Dead Sea, found a number of leather rolls covered with ancient Hebrew writing. Some of these "Dead Sea Scrolls" date from the first century before Christ, others from the first after Christ, but all were made before A.D. 70. One gives us a Hebrew text of the Book of Isaiah a thousand years older than any heretofore known, another contains a commentary on the prophecy of Habakkuk, and others give the rules of a monastic order very like the Essenes. One speaks at length about a "Teacher of Righteousness" who had appeared upon earth but had been executed by wicked rulers, but we cannot say whether this Teacher was a real man or only an ideal. The discovery of these scrolls caused archeologists to examine the region of the cave with great care, and they discovered many other scrolls as well as the foundations of a building that apparently had been a monastery. Coins found in the ruins date occupation from about 100 to 30 B.C., and again from about A.D. 10 to 70. The monks apparently hid the books of their library in the caves when the Romans came in 70 and destroyed the monastery. Scholars have not yet had time to

*Essenes
and the
"Dead Sea
Scrolls"*

study these scrolls as carefully as they deserve, but they have already given us new and valuable information about Jewish religious life in the time of Christ.

**A Messiah
expected**

At this time too the Jews were much concerned with speculations concerning the Messiah. Our word "Messiah" is merely the Anglicized form of a Hebrew word meaning "anointed": the corresponding Greek word is *christos*, whence our word "Christ." In the days of David and Solomon, Hebrew kings had become kings by being "anointed," just as in later times European kings were "crowned." The word "Messiah" therefore came to mean king, just as we sometimes say "the crown" when we mean "the king." After the Exile, however, the word came to refer to a special kind of king. Patriotic Jews longed for a return of political independence, which they symbolized by a return to power of the "House of David," or "The Messiah." In the days of Judas Maccabaens these dreams took on new life and vigor, and when political independence was finally achieved, it seemed that they had at last come true. But unfortunately the Maccabean kings failed to live up to what had been expected of them, and disillusioned idealists decided that another sort of Messiah would presently appear. This Messiah would appear by God's direct intervention in mundane affairs, and under him truth would prevail and righteousness triumph, but probably only after purification of the world by the sufferings of the Messiah and his followers. Perhaps the Teacher of Righteousness mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls was such a Messiah. During the period of Roman rule several persons proclaimed themselves to be the Messiah, or, more commonly, their enthusiastic followers proclaimed it for them. One such "Messiah" was Judas of Galilee, who was crucified for rebellion in A.D. 6, whose sons met the same fate about 44, and whose grandsons had a large share in instigating the revolt of 66; another was Simon Bar Kokba, who led the rebellion of 135; another was the John the Baptist mentioned in the Gospels; and still another was Jesus of Nazareth.

16. EARLY CHRISTIANITY

OUR knowledge of the earliest history of Christianity comes entirely from the New Testament. Here the four Gospels give their accounts of the life of Jesus, while the Acts of the Apostles tells of the early church and Paul. The remaining books of the New Testament—the Epistles of Paul and others, and the Revelation—illuminate many sides of early Christian life and thought, but they tell us nothing of the life of Jesus. All that we know of him comes from the Gospels.

**Sources
of our
knowledge**

Each of the Gospels associates the beginning of Jesus' public career with the preaching of John the Baptist. This strange man was a Messianic enthusiast, some of whose followers believed him to be the Messiah, though he apparently made no such claim for himself: he merely proclaimed that the Messiah would appear shortly and urged his hearers to prepare for this long-awaited event by repenting of their sins. To those who professed repentance he administered the rite of baptism. His activities centered in the region of the Jordan, east of Jerusalem, and attracted such attention that the authorities began to fear him. They therefore ordered him arrested and executed. Before his arrest, however, John had baptized Jesus.

**John
the Baptist**

Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus was born shortly before the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C. and lived for about thirty years at Nazareth, a town in northern Palestine, where he followed the trade of carpenter. He was attracted by the preaching of John, who baptized him about A.D. 28, after which Jesus began his own preaching. His earliest message was very like John's: "The Kingdom of Heaven [i.e., the Messianic

**Jesus
baptized
by John**

Kingdom] is at hand." Like John, he urged men to prepare themselves for the coming of the Kingdom by ethical reform. To aid his followers in this undertaking he set forth his famous ethical teachings, and the new views regarding a close relationship of God and man which Christians have ever since regarded as the heart of the Gospel.

**His
teachings**

In these teachings Jesus was, in a way, the successor of the great Hebrew prophets, but he broadened their teaching and he made what had once been addressed to one special people into something appropriate to all mankind. He used unforgettable parables to illustrate the nature of the Kingdom and the manner of its coming, and before long stories were told of his amazing power over demons and of other miraculous works. Hundreds flocked to hear him. When these marvelous events persuaded his most intimate associates that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, he bade them be silent. Nevertheless, he was profoundly impressed by what he saw about him, he reflected deeply upon God, the Kingdom, and the divine plan directing the universe, and he became convinced that he had been selected to play an important part in the great drama.

**His
crucifixion**

This early preaching was done in Galilee, the district around Nazareth, but presently Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Here he was greeted with tumultuous enthusiasm by the populace, who hailed him as the promised King (Messiah). Fearing lest the Romans misconstrue these demonstrations as political revolt and violently pacify the city, the Jewish authorities arrested Jesus themselves and handed him over to the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, charging him with subversive activities. Pilate ordered Jesus crucified. Above his head they fixed a placard declaring sardonically, "This is the King of the Jews." The most probable computations indicate that this supreme tragedy occurred on Friday, April 7, in A.D. 30.

**The first
Christian
preaching**

During the confusion attendant upon the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, many of his associates fled to Galilee. Within a few days, however, they were back in Jerusalem, confidently announcing that Jesus had risen from the dead, that they had seen him, and that he would soon return to establish the Messianic Kingdom. Within a short time these men had won many followers and Jerusalem again was full of excitement. The execution of Jesus had not pacified the city, but the Jewish authorities tried once more to ward off Roman intervention by themselves punishing those disturbing the peace. Several disciples were arrested and at least one (a man named Stephen) was executed. Many then left Jerusalem, thus spreading the

Gospel to nearby towns and cities. Some reached Caesarea, others Damascus, and still others traveled as far as Antioch. It was in the latter city that the disciples were first called "Christians."

The Christians then became somewhat less active in seeking new recruits, until disturbances in 40 and 41 launched them on a new course. The Emperor Caligula had conceived the unfortunate idea of setting up his own statue in the Temple at Jerusalem. He was murdered at Rome before the plan could be carried out and Rome thus narrowly escaped civil war in Palestine, but thousands of enthusiasts, both Jewish and Christian, expected that this "abomination of desolation" (supposedly prophesied in Daniel) would lead directly to the appearance of the Messiah. After the Romans had restored order, they executed several Jewish rebels who had claimed to be Messiahs, as well as one prominent Christian (James, the son of Zebedee), and they arrested Peter. When the excitement had died down, Christian leaders met in council at Jerusalem, about A.D. 45, and inaugurated a new program. They decided that the whole world must be evangelized before Jesus would return as Messiah. They therefore set out upon great missionary journeys, hoping to carry the Gospel to every corner of the earth.

**Plans to
evangelize
the world**

Paul of Tarsus

Meantime the Christians had won a great recruit in the person of Paul of Tarsus. A Jew of the diaspora, born to a family of importance and inheriting Roman citizenship, well educated in Hebrew and Greek, Paul differed noticeably from the earlier disciples. At first he persecuted the Christians but, as the famous story tells us, while on the road to Damascus to arrest disciples there, he underwent a psychological experience that converted him to Christianity (about A.D. 31). After passing several years in Antioch and Tarsus, preaching to Jews and Gentiles, he attended the council at Jerusalem, after which he set out on a series of great missionary journeys that took him through Asia Minor and Greece and eventually to Rome. There he was executed, probably in 67.

**Career
of Paul**

Paul's activities were dominated by a great idea. He tells us that he was brought up a strict Pharisee and that as a young man he went to Jerusalem to study the Jewish Law under famous teachers there. He no doubt shared with other ardent Jews of his day the hope, so often expressed by prophets, that Judaism and the wor-

**His
Christianity**

ship of Yahweh would some day be the religion of all mankind. But being a Jew of the diaspora, Paul knew from personal experience how difficult it would be to persuade Gentiles to accept the yoke of the Law. At first he feared and hated Christianity, and even assisted in the persecutions, because he thought it was weakening Judaism. After his experience on the Damascus road, however, he came to regard Christianity as a purified and perfected Judaism, retaining all its essentials but rejecting the minutiae of the Law which Gentiles would never accept. At the council in Jerusalem he induced his fellow Christians to agree that thereafter converts need not assume the full burden of the Law. In later years Paul was extremely bitter against those who insisted upon the whole Law, thus showing how fundamental he felt the whole matter to be. Paul was already looking forward to the day when Christianity would be the religion of the Roman Empire and of the world. This imperial dream also lay behind Paul's statesmanship in founding churches along the great roads, in the provincial capitals, and at last in Rome itself. He was founding a religious empire that was to parallel the political empire of Augustus and his successors. Paul was one of the great empire builders of the first century, and in due time his empire absorbed the one founded by Augustus.

*His
personality*

Moreover, Paul was one of the most interesting personalities of the ancient world. Deeply convinced that he had been set apart, even from his mother's womb, to preach the Gospel, Paul voluntarily gave up a life of scholarly ease to become a wandering preacher. Frail in body and afflicted with a serious infirmity, he deliberately faced labors such as might have daunted a stronger man. His intensely active mind poured forth the volcanic eloquence of his Epistles, and upon the foundations he here laid down, others reared the mighty edifice of Christian theology. He was the great organizer of the early church. Though differing from Jesus in temperament as much as a man well could, Paul amply deserved his fame as the second founder of Christianity.

THE EARLY CHURCH

*Churches in
the first
century*

While Paul was founding churches in Asia Minor and Greece, other apostles were carrying the Gospel to other parts of the world. After the council at Jerusalem, Peter went to Antioch, later he was at Corinth, and finally he reached Rome, where he was executed,

probably in 67. Other Christians had appeared in Rome as early as 41. Still others visited parts of Asia Minor untouched by Paul, established a church at Alexandria, and even began evangelizing the Parthian East. The church at Jerusalem remained the most important during those years, being presided over by James "the Just," a brother of Jesus, who had not been prominent before the Crucifixion. The Jewish War of 66-70 scattered this first Christian community, and thereafter most Christians were of Gentile origin.

Some forty years later, a Roman official named Pliny (a nephew of the scientist mentioned on page 224), reporting to Trajan from Asia Minor, spoke of the progress of Christianity in his province and declared the new religion to be spreading even to the villages. At the time of the death of Marcus Aurelius (180), Christianity had penetrated to practically every province of the Empire, but when compared with the total population Christians were not numerous. The best figures are only guesses, but they seem to indicate that in 160 there may have been a million Christians all told, or about 1 percent of the population of the Empire.

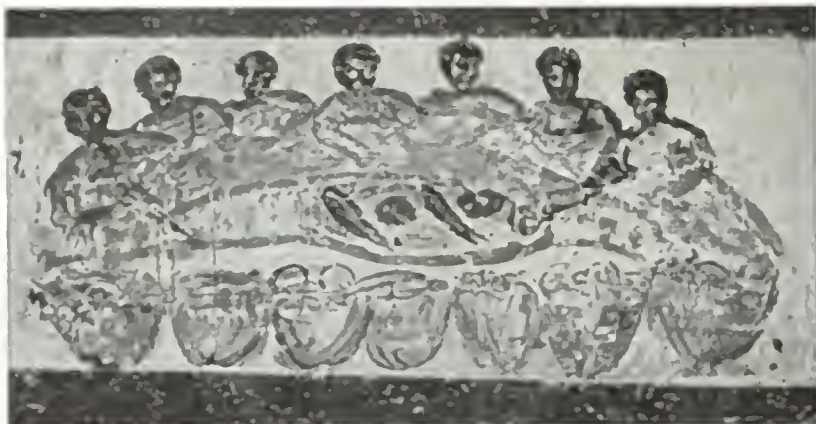
Most Christians in these first two centuries were persons of humble origin, belonging to the lower levels of the artisan-merchant class in the large cities. Many were, or had been, slaves. As Paul remarked, there were "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many well-born" among them; they were rather the "foolish," the "weak," the "lowly," the "nobodies." The early church was a great democratic and cosmopolitan society in which there was "neither Greek nor Jew, barbarian, Seythian, bond nor free." Here all men were equal. The early Christians were serious, sober, hard-working persons who found in their religion and its promises a release from the humdrum life to which they were reduced. We have already seen something of the pathetic condition of these displaced persons, and perhaps we can imagine what it meant to them when Christianity brought hope and color to their lives.

When Paul and other missionaries entered a new community, they usually went first to the local synagogue. Taking advantage of the prevailing liberty of speaking, they undertook to prove to the assembled congregation that Jesus was the Messiah. Such preaching often led to disputes, after which the Christians were excluded from the synagogue. Thereafter they held their meetings in private houses or other rooms. At these meetings they went through ceremonies closely resembling those of the synagogue, with the reading and explanation

**Progress in
the second
century**

**Early
converts**

**Church
services**



CHRISTIAN AGAPÉ. This is a wall painting of a Christian Agapé, or Love Feast. Here the assembled Christians ate ordinary food—in this case, bread and fish—though critics sometimes see a mystical meaning here. The Agapé was not a solemn sacrament, but a “church supper,” and it must not be confused with the Eucharist or Communion Service.

of passages from the Law and the Prophets, the singing of Psalms, and prayer.

**Baptism
and the
Eucharist**

From the earliest times, however, the Christians added two distinctive rites of their own. The first was baptism, “in the name of Jesus,” by which members were initiated into the Christian community. The second ceremony was a solemn eating of bread and drinking of wine in memory of the last supper of the disciples with Jesus on the eve of the Crucifixion. This latter ceremony—simply called “breaking bread” in the Acts of the Apostles, but later called the Eucharist from the Greek word for “thanksgiving” or, by Protestants, simply the “Lord’s Supper”—was regularly observed on the first day of the week.

**Awaiting
the Second
Coming**

From the earliest times Christians had expressed opinions about the nature of God, man, and the world, but at first their theology differed from that of the Jews on only one major matter. While the Jews believed that the Messiah—or Christ—was still to come, the Christians insisted that he had already appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, whom the Jews had wickedly slain, but who had risen from the dead and ascended into heaven, whence he would return shortly to establish the Messianic Kingdom. These first Christians searched the Jewish Scriptures diligently for passages that might be prophecies of the Messiah, and they quickly convinced themselves that the coming of Jesus had fulfilled all these predictions. Still more important, however, was the momentarily expected return of Jesus

as the Messiah. No one knew exactly when he would return, but it would be suddenly and soon. As the years rolled by, and Jesus failed to return, many Christians lost this assurance of an immediate Second Coming, but they never gave up their certainty that it would take place sooner or later. From that day to this, small groups of Christians have appeared at intervals to keep alive this early faith in a speedy return of Jesus, and we shall see that the visions, or "apocalypses," of such enthusiasts have sometimes played an important part in the secular history as well as the religious history of Christendom.

Paul added much to this simple theology. The earliest Christians had been Jews, thoroughly familiar with the religious traditions set forth in the Old Testament, preaching to Jews of similar background and knowing little of the world outside Palestine. Paul, on the other hand, was a Jew of the diaspora who had spent his early life among Gentiles and whose preaching was addressed primarily to Gentiles. Naturally he had to discuss the religious problems that interested his Gentile hearers and to speak their language. He therefore had much to say about immortality, sin, salvation, and the other questions which the oriental mysteries attempted to answer. He wrote no formal treatises on theology, but passages scattered here and there through his Epistles show that he thought often and deeply upon these great questions. He thus laid the foundations of Christian theology.

*Paul's
thinking*

The details of this theology need not detain us here, and we need only remark that the hints he gave enabled his followers to develop an elaborate view of the world that was both new and significant. It showed how sin entered the world with the first man, Adam, and pictured the progressive sinfulness of mankind as century followed century; it told how God punished sinful men, but at the same time promised through his inspired prophets that he would some day send a Savior; it announced that Jesus was this Savior, and that by his sufferings on the cross he had expiated the sins of the world. The coming of the Christ was thus made the central point in human history, and the most important problem in early Christian theology concerned his real nature. Some early Christians pictured Jesus as a mere man, albeit one endowed by God with marvelous powers; others considered him as a mere god, not very different from the various pagan gods who supposedly had died and risen from the dead; and still others placed him above men and angels

*Christian
theology*

though denying him complete divinity. None of these early views was acceptable to the great majority of Christians, but a successful formula was not found until the fourth century. Jesus was then declared to be both perfect God and perfect Man, the Son of God the Father and Creator, and the Second Person in the Holy Trinity.

**Orthodoxy
and heresy**

These theological questions were debated very seriously and at times acrimoniously, for the early Christians believed unity on such matters to be essential. The first to cause trouble were the gnostics, who became numerous in the church in the second century and who often denied the full humanity of Jesus. Their opponents insisted that such teaching would make Christianity just another mystery religion, with Jesus virtually indistinguishable from Mithra, Serapis, or Orpheus. For them, the great superiority of Christianity lay in the fact that Jesus had really lived as a man on earth very recently, whereas at best the others were mythical figures dating from a vague and hoary antiquity. The gnostics were therefore declared to be "heretics" (from the Greek word for a "sect" or "school" of philosophy, and ultimately from a verb meaning "to choose"), while their opponents called themselves "orthodox" because they held the "true opinion" (in Greek, *orthos* means "straight" or "true"; *doxa*, "opinion"). Of course these difficult problems could not be solved overnight, and some of them have continued to disturb Christianity throughout its history. The "orthodox" answer to these problems concerning the nature of Christ was finally given in the Nicene Creed (325), however, and this Nicene orthodoxy is usually taken as marking the end of the great creative age in the development of Christian theology.

The New Testament

**Christian
use of
the Bible**

These controversies made it desirable to have guides by which theological questions might be settled, and such a guide was found in the Scriptures, though they had originally been written for quite different purposes. Christians no longer observed the minutiae of the Mosaic Law, but they continued to read the Old Testament (in the Septuagint Greek translation; see page 89), partly because it was their heritage from Judaism, partly because of its religious and ethical merit, and partly because its prophecies were supposed to refer to Jesus. This Old Testament was presently supplemented with the books of our New Testament. As various Christians had written books in the first century, it became necessary to decide which of

them were authoritative, and the books so chosen form the "canon" of the New Testament. The authors of the canon included only those Christian writings which they believed (sometimes mistakenly) to be of apostolic origin—that is, to have been written by one of the original disciples of Jesus or by Paul. Though the selection was made largely in the second century, it was not until the fourth that the New Testament assumed its present form, and perhaps a few verses have been added even more recently.

The earliest writings in the New Testament are the Epistles of Paul. During the 50's and 60's Paul wrote letters to various churches, usually for quite specific purposes—to settle disputes, to correct abuses, or to denounce other teachers. After disposing of the main matter in hand, however, he would usually add a few remarks on theological or ethical matters, but he was not writing treatises on theology, as is sometimes erroneously assumed. A collection of his letters was presently made and circulated among the churches after his death.

*The Pauline
Epistles*

Next in time came the four Gospels. The earliest is the Gospel of Mark, which probably was written at Rome during the 50's. Tradition said that Mark had served Peter as interpreter, and presumably he recorded Peter's account of the life of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew came somewhat later. Its unknown author used Mark extensively, but he had a collection of the sayings of Jesus, part of which he incorporated in his Gospel as the "Sermon on the Mount," and he also had other written sources. The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles were the work of one man, who had been a companion of Paul. The last part of Acts is written largely in the first person, showing that it is personal reminiscence. The narrative of Acts goes down to 62, bringing Paul to Rome but saying nothing about his fate there, which seems to indicate the date of the book. Many scholars believe, however, that several years elapsed before this first draft was revised and published. When composing his Gospel, the author of Luke used Mark and the collection of sayings, but he also possessed still further information whose source we do not know. The author of Luke was a man of high literary skill and a good historian, and one modern writer has declared his Gospel to be "the most beautiful book in the world."

*The
Synoptic
Gospels*

As these three Gospels resemble each other rather closely, they are often called the Synoptics. The Fourth Gospel is quite different, repeating very few episodes narrated in the earlier accounts. While the Synoptics make Jesus talk mostly about ethical principles and

*The Gospel
of John*

the Messianic Kingdom, the Gospel of John pictures him as speaking especially of immortality, of sin and forgiveness, of his own relation to God, and of the symbolism of the Eucharist. This mystical Gospel has always been the most popular of the four with Christians. It was probably written at Ephesus late in the first century, but there is no satisfactory evidence as to its author.

**Revelation
and minor
Epistles**

The New Testament also includes eight minor Epistles—Hebrews, James, I and II Peter, I, II, and III John, and Jude, which are attributed to famous persons though their real authors are unknown—and it closes with the Revelation of John, probably written at Ephesus in the last days of Domitian. The author's name was John, but he probably was not the John who wrote the Gospel. His powerful imagination and literary ability, the poetic beauty of many passages, and the promise of a good time to come shortly have made his book of visions a favorite with many readers.

Church Government

**Orders
of clergy**

The second century also witnessed a great elaboration of church government. At first each local church—the group of converts in a single town—had been under the immediate care of the apostle who established it. When Paul left one community to evangelize another, he would appoint “elders” (*presbyteroi*), who continued his fostering care, and he gave his churches a permanent organization resembling that of the synagogues from which they had broken away. The government of the synagogue had been very democratic, the congregation being presided over by a group of men who owed their prestige to age, dignity, piety, or learning. Christian elders were men of much the same sort. We also read in the New Testament of officials called “bishops” (*episkopoi*) and others called “deacons” (*diakonoi*)—in Greek the former word means “overseers”; the latter, “servants”—who had much to do with governing the churches. Behind each of these offices lay a complicated history.

**Bishops
and priests**

The bishops seem to have been identical with the elders in the churches founded by Paul. In early times each local church might have several at one time, but it often happened that one bishop stood out among his colleagues, perhaps because of personal prestige or administrative ability, or perhaps because efficient management required centralized responsibility. Before the end of the second century each city customarily had only one bishop. The remaining

elders or priests (*presbyteroi*) held an intermediate position between the bishops and the deacons, and they devoted themselves largely to preaching and conducting worship. The bishop was chosen by the priests, with the approval of the Christian community, and he held office for life. He really governed the Christian community, and even in the second century some bishops were powerful men. The bishops of a province were in frequent communication with one another, and they occasionally assembled in provincial meetings called "synods." In this way a close Empire-wide organization gradually grew up.

The office of deacon dated back to the first days of the church at Jerusalem. These early Christians had been liberal in their charities, with the apostles themselves distributing food to the poor. Presently "deacons" were appointed to do this work, in order that the apostles might devote their whole time to preaching. In later times the deacons continued to look after charities and other temporal matters for their churches. Since they knew the business side of church life well, deacons rather than priests often were chosen bishops. At first these officials performed their duties in their spare time, each earning his own living as best he could, but before the end of the second century some communities supported a paid clergy who occupied themselves wholly with church affairs.

**Deacons as
business
managers**

From early times Christians had tended to hold themselves aloof from pagan society. This aloofness was encouraged by the popular hostility, and the aloofness in turn encouraged the hostility. Moreover, early Christians usually had neither the time, the means, nor the opportunity for much social life. Their church became the most important thing in their lives, they enjoyed the warmest friendship with other Christians, and they had little desire to seek further social contacts. But at the same time Christianity was spreading into all parts of the world, and Christians everywhere were extremely conscious of their kinship with all other Christians throughout the world. Christianity was not merely a world religion: it became a world society as well.

**The church
a world-
wide society**

The early Christians also developed new ideas about the nature of the church and its relation to society in general. They called their community the *ekklesia*, employing the Greek word for the political assembly of the citizens of a Greek city. They took the word, however, from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, where it was used only to designate the Jewish people assembled

**A state
within
the state**

for religious purposes. For the Christians, therefore, an *ekklesia* was a national assembly, and by adopting this word they showed that they considered themselves a nation or people. This idea had been expressed by Paul when he spoke of Christians as the "true Israel," or as "Israel after the spirit," as opposed to "Israel after the flesh." The author of I Peter, going further, spoke of them as "an elect race, a holy nation, a people." In the second century Christians sometimes referred to themselves as a "third race"—third, that is, in addition to Greeks and Jews—while pagans reviled them with the same epithet. It must be admitted that these early Christians were, in a sense, a "race" or "nation." They constituted a considerable body of people united, not by a real or fictitious common ancestry, but by an ardent consciousness of their unity, by a strong mutual loyalty, by a distinctive way of life, by a common intellectual background, and by a common hope. Joined by bonds such as these and by their distinction from the pagans, and governed by a well-organized clergy, the Christians had come to form a state within the Roman state.

CHURCH AND STATE

Rome's religious toleration

Modern ideas about the desirability of a complete separation of church from state were quite foreign to the ancient world. We have already seen (page 226) that in Republican Rome priests were magistrates, and that under the Empire the emperor himself regularly held the office of pontifex maximus. The senate decided which gods might be worshiped in the city, ordering Cybele brought from Asia Minor and expelling the Greek Bacchus and the Egyptian Isis. In general the Romans were tolerant toward foreign cults, forbidding only those religions that practiced barbarous rites, such as human sacrifice, or those which they suspected of subversive political activity, such as the Bacchic communities prosecuted in 186 B.C. (see page 226). In all these cases, as in that of Christianity, the attitude of the Roman government was determined by political rather than by theological considerations. The Romans were not religious bigots.

Christians suspected of sedition

From the earliest days, the Christians had a bad reputation with the Roman authorities. Pontius Pilate ordered the Crucifixion because the Jews had accused Jesus of rebellion, and a dozen years later James was executed after seditious disturbances in Palestine. Even though both victims were innocent, the Roman officials undoubtedly believed them guilty. Meantime Christians had been expelled from Rome for

rioting (41). When a fire burned a large part of the city in 64, and it seemed politically desirable to find a scapegoat, the Christians seemed an obvious group to accuse, and several were put to death. Three years later, Peter and Paul were likewise executed at Rome. We know nothing of the details, but it seems probable that by this time there was some general legislation against Christians; or perhaps the so-called *institutum neronianum*, which forbade men to be Christians, was merely an official interpretation of some existing law against secret associations. At any rate, we find cases from time to time during the next century, or even later, when Christians were executed simply for being Christians.

Nevertheless, we must not exaggerate the bloodthirsty nature of Rome's anti-Christian policies during the first two centuries. There was a law forbidding Christianity, to be sure, but under ordinary circumstances little effort was made to enforce it. When Pliny wrote to Trajan about the Christians (112), he had been a practicing lawyer at Rome for thirty years, yet he declared that he had never witnessed a case against Christians in court and therefore had no idea how to conduct one. Trajan replied that if a man brought before the court was clearly a Christian, and refused to recant, he must be punished, but that no search for Christians should be made, and that under no circumstances should anonymous denunciations receive attention. In times of political tension, as just after the murder of Caligula or in the last days of Nero or Domitian, jittery officials may have hunted out Christians, but in most cases legal action was brought by private citizens, and often the martyrs were merely the victims of mobs and lynch law.

**Laws
against
Christians**

Popular ill will toward Christians was shown in many ways that fell short of lynching or execution. One of our earliest pagan references to Christianity comes from the pen of the historian Tacitus, who accused them of "hatred of the human race." Others accused them of more horrible aberrations, such as cannibalism, incest, and atheism. Still others, preferring ridicule, whispered it about that the Christians really worshiped a god with an ass's head. Slightly more plausible charges suggested that slaves employed as nurses or house servants made great efforts to convert their young charges to Christianity, thereby blighting the child's chances for a distinguished marriage or career. Controversialists on a still higher level complained, with a large degree of truth, that Christians refused to serve in the army, to hold minor political offices, or to perform other patriotic

**Pagan
criticism
of the
Christians**

duties—in a word, that they were bad citizens. When men were dragged into court charged with being Christians, they were always given an opportunity to prove their innocence by simply burning a pinch of incense before the statue of a pagan god or the emperor. Convinced Christians regarded such an act as gross idolatry and refused to perform it, even at the cost of their lives; pagans regarded it as a minor patriotic gesture (much as we regard saluting the flag) and insisted that there must be something radically wrong with a man who refused to make so trivial a sign of loyalty to the Empire.

*Provoking
attitude of
Christians*

It must also be admitted that the Christians sometimes intensified their unpopularity by provoking the pagans. Their claimishness and general aloofness encouraged fantastic stories about them. If a man's wife were converted, she might seriously impair his social position, whatever that might be, by refusing to associate with his pagan friends; or she might even leave him, taking the children with her, if he refused to be converted too. Naturally that man and his friends became rather bitter critics of all Christians. Ill feelings might also result if a girl, converted to Christianity, suddenly refused to marry a pagan friend of the family. Christians' claims to a higher morality, and their frequent denunciation of ancestral institutions and practices, offended pagan hearers. Stoic philosophers said exactly the same things with impunity, but they continued to live in the society they criticized whereas the Christians withdrew and denounced it from the outside. Thus popular hostility and persecution appear as striking evidence that, even in the second century, Christianity and paganism had become two mutually exclusive ways of life, two different civilizations, which were already at war with one another.



CARICATURE OF THE CRUCIFIXION. The crude drawing was scratched on the wall of a building in Rome in the second or third century, presumably by someone who wished to ridicule a fellow servant who was a Christian. The Greek letters spell three words meaning, "Alexamenos worships God."

The Third Century

The coming of the Severi brought a new stage in the history of Christianity, and the first member of that dynasty, Septimius Severus (193–211), is remembered in Christian history as one of the great persecutors. In his early years as emperor he met strong opposition in the East, and apparently he blamed the Christians for a part of his difficulties. Christianity had made great progress at Edessa, the capital of a small buffer state in northern Syria, and its ruler, Abgar IX (179–214), had become the first Christian king in history. When this tiny state went to war with Severus in 195, he apparently feared the disloyalty of Christians within the Empire itself. There were riots in Egypt between Christians and pagans, and a Christian prophecy suddenly appeared which predicted the fall of Rome in this very year, 195; another prophesied the coming of the anti-Christ in 202. Alarmed by these manifestations, Septimius issued two edicts in 202 forbidding the conversion of pagans to Christianity or Judaism. Many Christians in Egypt and North Africa were punished for disregarding the edicts.

**Septimius
Severus**

Except for this one occurrence, Christianity enjoyed peace and even imperial favor under the Severi. Septimius's wife, Julia Domna, was the daughter of a Syrian priest, and after her death (217) her two nieces wielded great influence as the mothers of successive emperors. Orientals flocked to court, bringing oriental ideas and oriental religions into prominence. During his brief reign Elagabalus (218–222) devoted more care to performing his duties as priest of an oriental god than he did to his duties as emperor. A few years later, under Severus Alexander (222–235), a temple was built to Mithra on the Capitoline Hill in Rome, close by the temple of Juno herself. Even Christianity began to receive more respectful attention at court. Alexander erected statues of Abraham and Christ beside those of Orpheus and Apollonius of Tyana in his private chapel: he intended it as a compliment, but many Jews and Christians resented having their heroes associated with a pagan god and a pagan preacher of virtue. Alexander also ordered the Golden Rule, taken from the Gospels, inscribed on a public building, and his mother summoned a famous Christian theologian from Alexandria to explain his religion to her.

**Toleration
under the
Severi**

During the next fifty years, when Rome was ruled by the barrack-room emperors and everything seemed to be going wrong, Christianity made remarkable progress. In fact, the political chaos of the

**Rapid
progress of
Christianity**

age was an aid to the Christians. The backbone of the old regime was now broken, and Christianity's close organization and trained officials enabled it to make the most of the social fluidity that followed. In those days of economic confusion, the sobriety and frugality of the Christians, and their ability to rest content with little, were valuable virtues which won respect and brought new converts to the religion. Moreover, these same virtues enabled many Christians to raise their economic and social status. Presently Christianity was no longer a religion of slaves and the lower levels of the urban proletariat. Again it produced scholars and thinkers who, like Paul, could discuss matters with pagans on their own ground. And finally, members of the educated upper classes, disgusted with the barrack-room emperors and their underlings, began seeking refuge in Christianity. The church therefore grew rapidly in the third century. There had been about a million Christians in the world in 180; there were perhaps six or eight million in 300, though the population of the Empire as a whole had declined drastically. Where Christians had formerly been barely 1 percent they now made up at least 10 percent of the population, and their numbers now included persons of high importance.

Persecution by Decius and Diocletian

Systematic persecution by Decius

Except for a few sporadic outbreaks, the persecution of Christians almost stopped after the affair of 202. During the excitement following the murder of Alexander and the seizure of power by Maximinus (235), a few Christians were killed in Syria and Rome, and two rival popes were expelled from the city, but Christians did not suffer again until the days of Decius (249-251). Persecution stopped again when he was killed in battle, but a few years later it was resumed by Valerian (253-259). The measures taken by Decius were the most systematic and the most far-reaching yet attempted. Orders were issued that every person in the Empire—or at least every free adult male—must sacrifice to the pagan gods and receive a certificate stating that he had done so: in our own day a few of these certificates have been recovered from the sands of Egypt. Those who refused to sacrifice were to be executed, and several thousand Christians lost their lives. It proved impossible, however, for the Roman government to enforce its order. Certificates were easily forged and sold to Christians; pagans were hired to sacrifice for them. The more austere churchmen denounced such cheating as equally reprehensible with

actual sacrificing, but most Christians did not have to do either. Not one Christian in a hundred was seriously bothered, simply because the imperial authorities did not have the means to enforce such an order.

Why did Decius make this great effort to stamp out Christianity? Various answers to this question have been suggested. His immediate predecessor as emperor had been Philip the Arab (243-249), an Oriental whose indulgence toward the new sect was so great that false rumors accused him of secretly being a Christian himself. Decius was a Westerner from Illyria (a province then scarcely touched by Christianity) and may have wished to reverse his predecessor's policy for political reasons. Perhaps he and the legions who put him in office had been offended by Christian criticisms of the military profession. Or perhaps Decius sincerely believed that the unprecedented calamities suffered by the Empire in recent years were a punishment from the pagan gods for neglect of the old religion and that a universal supplication, participated in by every citizen of the Empire, would restore their favor. And finally, the edicts against the Christians followed shortly upon a spectacular celebration of the thousandth anniversary of the founding of Rome. Decius was trying desperately to restore the morale of the Empire, and his plans called for the elimination of that Empire's principal critics.

**Reasons
for
persecution**

In the long run Decius's efforts defeated their purpose by turning men's sympathies toward Christianity. As one Christian writer had already remarked, "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." The old slanders about cannibalism and incest were rarely repeated now, and the populace behaved quite differently at the executions. The martyrs of the second century had died amidst the jeers and howls of the mob; when Cyprian was beheaded in 258 the pagans stood by in grim silence, fully aware that a terrible thing was being done, and the Christians, present in large numbers without being molested, were allowed to carry his body away in a triumphal procession. Public opinion was turning against persecution. Therefore Gallienus, realizing the futility of violence, discontinued the persecutions soon after his father's death (260). For more than forty years thereafter the Christians enjoyed peace.

**Public
opinion
against
persecution**

We naturally wonder why the Christians did not take advantage of these favorable circumstances to establish a *modus vivendi* with the Roman government. Jews had always been as unpopular as the Christians with the populace, and they had repeatedly risen in armed

**Christians
embittered**

revolt, which the Christians never did. Nevertheless, the emperors excused all Jews from sacrifices and other civic obligations incompatible with their religion. Had the Christians seriously tried to reach an understanding with the government, they would probably have been accorded similar status. The Christians never tried. Embittered by two centuries of persecution, they did not wish to come to an understanding with their enemies.

**Forty years
of peace**

After Gallienus's surrender in 260, the imperial authorities ignored Christianity for forty years. The Christians multiplied rapidly during these years of peace, they rose in the social scale, they acquired valuable properties, and they openly built large churches. The wife and daughter of the Emperor Diocletian (284–305) were Christians, and a large Christian church faced his palace in Nicomedia. The emperor was well disposed toward the Christians, but his Caesar, a general named Galerius, was bitterly hostile. After a victory over the Armenians in 297, he became aggressively intolerant. As the king of Armenia was a Christian, Galerius may have suspected that he received aid from Christians within the Empire. He therefore purged his army of Christians—very few Christians entered the army, but during these last forty years converts had often remained in service—and in 303 he persuaded Diocletian to inaugurate a general persecution.

**Diocletian's
persecution
(303–311)**

At first Diocletian insisted that there be no bloodshed, but when his early measures proved ineffective, he revived Decius's order (304). The longest and bloodiest of all the persecutions followed, but in the end it failed. Diocletian retired in 305 and died a few years later, and at last Galerius, old, sick, and discouraged, admitted that he could not abolish Christianity. Shortly before his death in April, 311, he signed an edict granting equal toleration to all religions. The Christians had won their great struggle with the Roman state. A few months later the rising young Constantine publicly embraced Christianity and ended the persecutions. Many attempts have been made to estimate the total number of Christian martyrs, from the Crucifixion to Constantine, and it is still possible to find scholars who place the figure at a million or more. One percent of that figure would doubtless be much too low, 10 percent too high.

17. CHRISTIANITY TRIUMPHANT

CONSTANTINE'S father, Constantius, had once been a worshiper of Sol Invictus ("The Unconquered Sun"), a deity of Mithraic origin whom he identified with Apollo, but when he discarded Helena and married Theodora, daughter of the Augustus Maximian (293), he transferred his allegiance to his father-in-law's favorite deity, Hercules. The young Constantine, then about thirteen years old, followed his father, and his ties with Hercules were strengthened when he married Maximian's other daughter, Fausta (307). After he had forced his new father-in-law to commit suicide (310), he reverted to the worship of Apollo, who was said to have appeared to him in a vision, promising victory. During the next two years Constantine's chief rival in the West was Fausta's brother, Maxentius, who remained true to Hercules and claimed the favor of all the pagan gods. Constantine finally defeated him in a battle fought near the Milvian bridge, just outside Rome (October, 312). On the eve of the battle Constantine saw another vision, this time of a cross, and the next day he ordered his soldiers to mark their shields with a Christian symbol. He then attributed his victory to the Christian God and declared himself a Christian.

**Constantine's
religious
background**

In the nineteenth century rationalistic historians were inclined to scoff at this story and to explain Constantine's conversion as the trick of a cool-headed politician seeking Christian support. Such a theory is very difficult to defend, and it now finds few advocates. Neither Constantine nor anyone else in his day was a nineteenth-century rationalist in matters of religion. He was an impulsive and grossly superstitious man whose conduct may well have been deter-

**His
conversion**



CHURCH OF SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE. This church was erected early in the fifth century but has since been altered many times. When compared with the catacombs (page 247), it suggests how much the position of Christians had changed in the course of a little more than a century. It illustrates the "basilica" type of architecture.

mined by dreams and visions. Also he may have been impressed by the courage and strength shown by Christians under persecution, and wisely decided to court the favor of a God who could work such wonders. But though he favored Christians and their God after 312, he was careful not to burn his bridges behind him. He also recognized the power of other gods (or other manifestations of the one true God, as he might have said) and he retained the position of pontifex maximus which made him official head of the pagan cult—as did all his Christian successors for the next fifty years. As late as 330 he still issued coins bearing the image of Sol Invictus. He was the first Christian emperor, but not until he reached his deathbed did he formally become a Christian by baptism, and only rarely did he make a noteworthy effort to direct his life in accordance with the precepts of the Gospels.

*Gifts to
the church*

Constantine found many ways in which to favor Christianity. A few months after the victory over Maxentius he met with his princi-

pal remaining rival, Licinius, at Milan. There the two men issued the famous Edict of Milan (313), by which they granted complete religious toleration to all religions and promised to restore Christian property confiscated during the persecution. A little later, Sundays and Christmas Day were declared legal holidays. So many privileges were extended to the Christian clergy that the rush of applicants for ordination had to be checked by new laws. Constantine and his mother Helena—who had followed him into Christianity—were most generous in their gifts to the church. At Rome Constantine gave the sumptuous Lateran palace to the popes, who used it as their official residence for several centuries. Many new churches were built and old ones repaired. The new capital at Constantinople was to be a Christian city, with magnificent churches among its most imposing buildings—though of course it numbered many pagans among its citizens and there were pagan temples dating from the days of old Byzantium. Famous churches were also built at Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

Constantine soon found that he could not avoid mixing in church affairs. Both he and the church leaders were most anxious to maintain the harmony and unity of the church, which then contained many quarreling factions. Constantine could not ignore these factions when restoring church property: to which faction should he give compensation? He therefore ordered church councils to adjudicate disputed matters and heal the schisms. At first the councils were local, but in 325 bishops from all over the Christian world were summoned to Nicaea, in northwestern Asia Minor, to settle a theological controversy raised by an Alexandrian priest named Arius regarding the nature of Christ and his relationship to God. Out of this council came the Nicene Creed, which is still accepted by most Christian churches.

**Concern
with church
affairs**

THE CHURCH IN THE FOURTH CENTURY

The conversion of Constantine was followed by a rush of converts to Christianity, which continued throughout the fourth century. When it became smart and stylish, and even politically helpful, to profess Christianity, many worldly people entered the church for unworthy reasons. We must not assume, however, that all, or even most, of the new converts were hypocrites. Many high-minded persons who had admired Christianity and its teachings before, but who lacked the courage and fanaticism of martyrs, now entered the

**Popularity
of
Christianity**

church. The strenuous measures of Diocletian and other persecutors had called the attention of everyone to the religion, and the martyrs had convinced many that the Christian faith had powers shared by no others. When complete religious liberty prevailed, Christianity's superior merits enabled it to make rapid progress.

**The
dominant
religion**

It is quite impossible to give exact figures illustrating this growth of the church. At the time of Constantine's conversion, Christians may have made up 10 or 12 percent of the Empire's population, with two-thirds or three-quarters of them in the more densely inhabited eastern provinces. A hundred years later half of the population may have been Christian, with the East still leading in percentage as well as in absolute numbers. Here all classes of persons, both in cities and in villages, were Christians, while in the West Christianity was still predominantly a city religion. The disasters which overwhelmed the Western world in the fifth century turned countless others to Christianity, and in the sixth century Greco-Roman paganism and the oriental mystery religions finally ceased to exist as such.

**Paganism
destroyed**

The Edict of Milan (313) had granted equal toleration to all religions, and for a moment Christians seemed satisfied. Under Constantine's sons, however, they sometimes became restless. Pagan temples were destroyed or converted into churches; temple property was confiscated and sold; idols were smashed or melted down; and individual Christians sometimes committed deeds of violence against pagans. No longer content with the toleration for which they had once prayed, many Christians began saying that the state should tolerate no other religion. Pagan resentment became so great that the Emperor Julian (360-363) decided to attempt a revival of paganism. His untimely death put an end to his efforts, and thereafter the status of the pagans and their gods grew steadily worse. The Emperor Gratian (367-383) refused the title *pontifex maximus*, after which the imperial government no longer maintained official relations with the pagan deities. A decree of 380 ordering all pagans to become Christians could not be enforced, but in 392 Theodosius crowned a long series of anti-pagan laws with one forbidding sacrifices or other honors to the old gods. Sometimes, too, the pagans suffered violence, as when the bishop of Alexandria led a mob that destroyed a magnificent temple to Serapis in 391. One of the more violent Christians was a certain Cyril, bishop of Alexandria (412-444), whose zeal was turned against Jews, pagans, heretics, and supposed heretics. One of his great triumphs came when his followers lynched Hypatia, a beautiful

and talented lady of Alexandria, a teacher, and the author of several books on mathematics and the Neo-Platonic philosophy (415).

Both Christian and imperial authorities were more concerned about heresy than about paganism. Heresies usually began with the expression of a theological opinion which others regarded as a deviation from true doctrine, but they were much aggravated by nationalistic and class feeling, and they often served as a means of protest against the political and theological absolutism that emanated from Constantinople. Heresy thus became a threat to the unity of both church and state. At the Council of Nicaea (325) Constantine vainly tried to end the Arian heresy (founded by Arius; see page 327), but Arianism continued to flourish and presently it became popular at court. Constantine was baptized by an Arian bishop whom he had once exiled, and his sons were avowed Arians. Gratian and Theodosius were great champions of orthodoxy, however, and Arianism was presently stamped out. Meantime other heretics arose, and church councils had condemned their teachings. Not content with condemning error, both church and state finally invoked violence against it. In the days of Theodosius, barely three-quarters of a century after Diocletian's persecution, a number of unfortunates were executed for heresy at Bordeaux. They were the first Christians to be executed—not merely lynched—by their fellow Christians for their theological beliefs. A practice was thus inaugurated which continued to disgrace Christianity for many centuries to come.

*Persecution
of heretics*

Church Organization

The great increase in the number of Christians, as well as their new political status, entailed a rapid development of church government. The three orders of clergy—bishops, priests, and deacons—had existed from early times (see page 272), and in the fourth century their organization was fitted to the political organization of the Empire set up by Diocletian and Constantine. Thereafter the political and religious officials paralleled each other rather closely, whether in villages, cities, or provinces. A priest looked after the church in a village; a bishop, with priests as assistants, had charge of the churches of a city and its surrounding villages; and a bishop of higher rank, called an archbishop, exercised a general supervision over all the churches of a province. There was, however, no exact ecclesiastical counterpart to the central government in the fifth century. Five of the

*Ranks of
the clergy*

more important bishops, sometimes known as patriarchs, were recognized as enjoying special prestige and authority; they were the bishops of Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. The patriarch of Jerusalem owed his eminence to the association of his city with the first Christians; the patriarch of Constantinople was the emperor's agent in religious matters; and the other three were the bishops of the three strongest churches in Christendom. We shall see in the next chapter (page 306) that early in the seventh century Moslems conquered Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. Thereafter the patriarchs of Constantinople and Rome were the two most eminent leaders of the church, one in the Greek East, the other in the Latin West.

**Importance
of the
Roman
Church**

The position and growing powers of the bishop of Rome, or pope, require special attention. The church at Rome was one of the oldest in the West and even in the first century one of the strongest in the world. It had witnessed the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul and in later times had contributed many martyrs of its own. It was distinguished for its charitable works: by the year 250 it supported fifteen hundred widows and other unfortunates with its ample funds. At first the church at Rome was Greek-speaking, with few true Romans in its membership, but in the second century the Latin-speaking members gradually won the upper hand and elected Romans as popes. Often these popes were able and ambitious men who shared imperial Rome's thirst for rule and world dominion. They began claiming that they ought by right to rule the whole Christian Church. One of the earliest popes to put forward such claims was Victor (189-198), but in the next century several of his successors surpassed him in aggressiveness.

**Papal
primacy**

The removal of the capital to Constantinople, coupled with the rapid growth of Christianity in the fourth century, left the pope one of the most important men in the West. Damasus (366-384), an extremely able man of broad views but fond of living in a luxurious style, did much to promote papal primacy. His successor Siricius (384-398) was the first to issue decretals (interpretations of church law), which were supposedly binding on the whole church and which actually were accepted widely in the West. The barbarian invasions of the fifth century further enhanced the power and prestige of the popes, who appeared as the leading champions of Christian civilization against Gothic barbarism. (The Goths, though Christians, were Arians converted by a certain Ulfilas [c. 311-381], sent from Con-

stantinople in the days of Constantius II, 337–361.) But while the West gradually came to accept the primacy of the pope over all other bishops, the East insisted that the patriarch of Constantinople had equal authority. Nevertheless, eastern bishops occasionally invoked a pope as referee in their disputes, thereby acknowledging his eminence, and on other occasions popes intervened without being invited.

The popes defended their claims to primacy in many ways but after the fourth century they relied especially upon what is known as the "Petrine theory." This theory teaches that Peter was the "Prince of the Apostles," that he was the first bishop of Rome, and that the words addressed to him in the Gospels also apply to his successors, the popes. The chief of these texts is the famous one from Matthew (16:18), reporting Jesus as saying, "Thou art Peter [Greek, *Petros*], and on this rock [Greek, *petra*] I will build my church." Few equally brief statements have had a greater influence upon the course of history.

*"Petrine
theory"*

The popes of the fourth century may have been aggressive in claiming primacy within the church, but they usually were quite deferential toward the emperor. Damasus never forgot that he owed his position to the emperor, and Siricius was not a man to defy the authorities. Nevertheless the emperors did not have everything their own way. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria (328–373), for example, had to be exiled five times because of his strenuous opposition to the Arianism favored by the emperors.

*Church
and state*

At the end of the century Ambrose, bishop of Milan (374–397), went even farther. As Milan was the seat of imperial headquarters for the West, Ambrose had many contacts with the emperors. Twice he humiliated Theodosius publicly. When a mob of Christians destroyed a synagogue in Syria, Theodosius ordered the bishop of the town to have it rebuilt. Ambrose denounced the emperor to his face from the pulpit, reminded him that he owed his empire to God, and compelled him to rescind the order. A few years later, in 391, Ambrose found a much better complaint against Theodosius. The emperor had ordered his soldiers to massacre a large number of persons at Thessalonica because of a riot there. Ambrose excluded him from the church and forced him to do penance before readmitting him. Theodosius learned his lesson well and was careful not to offend the formidable bishop again. Ambrose thus became the first Christian to prove that the church could dictate to the state, a precedent which was to embarrass later rulers.

*Ambrose
and the
emperor*

*The Church Fathers***Educated
Christians
in the third
century**

Toward the beginning of the third century, when Christianity first attracted educated pagans in considerable numbers, Christian writing and thinking rose to higher intellectual levels than any known to the church since New Testament times. These new converts were familiar with the great works of pagan culture, and they expected the leaders of their new faith to live up to the same high intellectual standards. Christian preachers therefore began to study the masterpieces of pagan oratory while Christian writers discussed questions of history and philosophy. Apologists were no longer called upon to refute such pagan slanders as those charging Christians with cannibalism and incest, but to be successful they had to present a large and carefully considered view of the world in harmony with the best information available.

**Clement of
Alexandria**

Alexandria became the first center of this new Christianity. Here a certain Pantaenus had opened a school for Christians late in the second century. Before his conversion to Christianity, he had been a teacher of Stoic philosophy and afterward he continued to teach all the traditional subjects in his school, merely adding Christian theology. After his death the school was continued by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–220), who, before his conversion, had received a good pagan education at Athens. On one occasion Clement remarked that God had used the Greek philosophers as well as the Hebrew prophets to lead men to Christianity.

Origen

The great glory of the Alexandrian school was Origen (185–253). Though brought up a Christian (his father was martyred in 202), Origen read so widely in pagan literature that a contemporary critic accused him of studying Plato more than he did the Gospels. He was personally acquainted with Plotinus, the philosopher of Neo-Platonism. His writings covered a wide range of subjects, including sermons, commentaries on the Bible, and theology, but two of his works stand out above all others. One was his careful edition of the Old Testament in Greek, the other his reply to Celsus, a pagan critic of Christianity. As he copied out Celsus's whole book, paragraph by paragraph, following each section with his reply, we can easily reconstruct the lost text of the original attack. Celsus was a Platonist, and in general his arguments were on a high plane, but Origen's replies were overwhelming. Origen's influence upon Christian thought was

enormous, but in the fourth century he came to be considered heretical because his views on the Trinity could not be harmonized with Nicene orthodoxy.

Carthage was to western Christianity what Alexandria was to eastern. Here the Bible was early translated from Greek into Latin, and here Tertullian (160–230) did his work. Before his conversion he had been a lawyer, and his writings show a mind trained in Roman law just as Origen's betray the Platonic philosopher, but Tertullian added a puritanical austerity which modern writers sometimes attribute to his African ancestry or environment. His best-known work is his *Apology*. In his later years Tertullian too became entangled in heresy and died outside the church. A few years later the African church was illuminated by Cyprian (200–258), descendant of an old Roman family, who had been a professor of rhetoric before his conversion. In his writings he had much to say on matters of church policy and government, thus showing his heritage from ancient Rome, and we have seen (page 279) that he met a martyr's death under Valerian.

Tertullian

The fourth century was the great age of the Fathers of the Church. These Fathers were the intellectual leaders of their day, without peer among their pagan contemporaries. They filled in the heretofore sketchy outline of Christian theology, elaborating a system that was to dominate European thought for more than a thousand years. Of the many Greeks only two can be mentioned here, Eusebius of Caesarea in Palestine (260–340), a friend of Constantine, an admirer of Origen, and a semi-Arian, was the scholarly "Father of Church History." His *Ecclesiastical History* tells us most of what we know about Christian history in the second and third centuries, and his *Chronicle* made an important effort to unite the political histories of all the ancient states from Adam to his own day, with everything centering around the coming of Christ and the rise of Christianity. Athanasius of Alexandria (293–373), whose quarrels with the Arian emperors we have already mentioned, wrote copiously on theological topics. The Latin West also produced distinguished Christian writers, among them the Ambrose of Milan (c. 340–397) mentioned above, but we can give extended mention only to Jerome and Augustine.

**Eusebius
of Caesarea**

Jerome (340–420) was born of Christian parents in Illyria, but as a young man he taught literature at Rome. Presently his religion overcame his infatuation with the works of Cicero, and in 379 he was ordained priest. He served Pope Damasus as secretary and traveled

Jerome

in the East, eventually settling in a monastery at Bethlehem where he passed the last thirty years of his life. Jerome is noted especially for the Latin translation of the Bible, commonly called the Vulgate, which he made at the suggestion of Damasus. There had been Latin translations before his time, but all were made from the Greek and none was very satisfactory. With the aid of rabbis in Bethlehem, Jerome learned Hebrew in order to translate the Old Testament from the original text. His translation is a magnificent piece of Latin prose and, with slight alterations, it is still accepted as authoritative by the Roman Catholic Church. Jerome also published many other works. He translated Eusebius's *Chronicle*, greatly amplifying it and continuing it down to his own day. This translation was directly or indirectly the source from which most medieval writers drew their information about the history of Greece and Rome. Jerome's lives of various saints popularized a type of literature that remained a favorite throughout the Middle Ages. And finally, he engaged in frequent and furious controversy with pagans, heretics, and orthodox Christians. Jerome was the outstanding scholar of the ancient church.

Augustine

Augustine (354-430) was born near Carthage in North Africa, the son of a pagan father and a pious Christian mother. After receiving a literary education at Carthage, he became professor of rhetoric at Rome and later at Milan. For a while his restless interest in religious and philosophical problems turned his attention to Manichaeism, an austere religion of Persian origin (Mani, its founder, was crucified in Persia in 276) which preserved the old Zoroastrian dualism of God and Satan and emphasized sin and redemption, but which was much influenced by Christianity. Later Augustine was deeply affected by the Neo-Platonists. While at Milan he became acquainted with Ambrose, under whose influence he was converted and baptized (387). Returning to Africa, he became bishop of Hippo, where he remained until his death in 430. He wrote a prodigious number of books on diverse theological topics—the Trinity, predestination, grace, free will, the origin of evil, salvation, and the like—and he has ever since been counted among the greatest of Christian theologians. Not all his followers could wield so mighty a sword as his, however, and many who tried cut themselves badly. Countless heretics of the Middle Ages, as well as Luther and Calvin, drew their theological inspiration from him.

The City of God

The two of Augustine's books whose appeal has reached beyond professional theologians are the *Confessions* (carrying the story of his

life down to his return to Africa) and *The City of God*. When Alaric the Goth sacked Rome in 410 many pagans complained that the world's misfortunes were due to Christian neglect of the old gods, and Augustine wrote *The City of God* to refute this charge. The first half of the book was devoted to showing that Rome was no better off in the old days, and that the pagan gods (whom he considered demons) were powerless to help their worshipers. Augustine then developed at length his theory of Two Cities—the "terrestrial city" represented by the various empires from Assyria to Rome, and the "heavenly city" of the saints, from Adam through the Hebrews to the Christians. Augustine had come to look on the Christian Church as a new but quite different empire rising from the ruins of old Rome. In this he was not mistaken.

The Beginnings of Monasticism

One other aspect of the fourth-century church deserves our attention. As soon as Christianity became popular, austere Christians of the old school began saying that it was impossible to lead a truly Christian life in the debased church of their day. Even in the third century ardent Christians of this sort in Egypt had begun to withdraw into the desert, hoping to lead more perfect lives. Such flight from the world was encouraged by the economic and political distress of the time, when all worldly things seemed to be going to rack and ruin. Long before the advent of Christianity, Egyptian peasants had often reacted to similar conditions in the same way, and in the fourth century many reverted to this ancient form of escape.

**Christian
world flight**

The first Christian anchorites, or hermits, went out as individuals, living alone or in small groups in caves or ruins, praying, fasting, mortifying the flesh, and constantly struggling against the demons that beset them from every side. Antony and Paul, semilegendary hermits of the days before Constantine, made enormous reputations by living thus, and their deeds were imitated by lesser men. The practice spread to Syria, and in the fifth century a hermit there, now known as St. Simeon Stylites, carried world flight to the ultimate by passing thirty years on top of a sixty-foot pillar, his admirers bringing him food and water which he pulled up in a basket.

**The first
hermits**

The solitary hermit fleeing to the wilderness illustrates an important aspect of the social and religious history of the fourth century, but monasteries provided better refuges for Christians who wished to

**Pagan
monasticism**

lead holy lives apart from the everyday world. Monasteries were nothing new. Even in the second century before Christ the Serapeum near Memphis had sheltered recluses dedicated to the god. Shortly after the time of Christ a Jewish writer described a similar community of Jews near Alexandria. An order known as Essenes had monasteries near the Dead Sea (whence came the famous "Dead Sea Scrolls"; see page 261), and other groups had similar houses in the West.

Early monasteries

The first organizer of Christian monasticism was an Egyptian named Pachomius. After living for several years as an anchorite, he drew up a rule for the guidance of monks and organized his first community near Thebes in Upper Egypt in 318. Similar communities soon sprang up in other parts of the East, and a few were to be found in the West. Sometimes these monasteries were large establishments housing a hundred or more monks, who lived frugal and sober lives, dividing their time between work and prayer, owning their scanty property in common, and usually avoiding the extreme mortifications of the anchorites. Jerome was much interested in establishing such communities for men and others for women, and at about the same time Basil, bishop of Caesarea in Asia Minor, drew up the rules still followed by monks in the Eastern Church.

Benedict

Monasticism penetrated the West slowly, and the excesses of the eastern anchorites never became popular there. Several communities of monks existed in Italy and Gaul in the fifth century, but only with the reforms of Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–c. 543) did monasticism become important in the West. Though born to a well-to-do family and sent to Rome to complete a legal education, Benedict preferred the religious life. He is said to have lived for three years in a cave in the hills east of Rome, associating with monks. About 520 he established a monastery at Monte Cassino—a site halfway between Rome and Naples, again made famous in World War II. Benedict gave his monks an elaborate set of rules. Monks were to be chosen carefully after a long novitiate, and on entering the order each was to take the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to his superiors. Each monastery was under the rule of an abbot, chosen by the monks themselves. Austerities were reduced to a minimum, but each monk was to work hard—usually in the fields—for several hours a day. Other hours were set apart for prayer and devotions, still others for reading and study. Food was to be plain but adequate. These rules were so sensible that monasticism spread rapidly throughout western

Europe, and for several centuries Benedictine monks were among Europe's most potent cultural and intellectual leaders.

CHRISTIANITY AND ANCIENT CULTURE

The victory of Christianity marked the completion of a social and cultural revolution that had begun with Rome's conquest of the Mediterranean world. Augustus and his colleagues had found moderately satisfactory answers to the political problems raised by this conquest, but they had scarcely touched the deeper social and cultural problems. The passing of the old political system of countless independent states destroyed the old social organization and left countless millions with no very clearly defined place in society. As time went on, this class of socially displaced persons became larger rather than smaller. The confusion of the third century, and the government's despotic efforts at regimentation in the fourth, made the situation infinitely worse.

**A social
and cultural
revolution**

When Christianity first appeared, it made its appeal largely to members of this submerged social class. The ancient proletarian who became a Christian no longer felt himself to be a displaced person for his Christianity provided him with a spiritual home. It showed him that there were important things in which he could share personally. It gave him something for which to hope. It won his undying loyalty, and sometimes it fortified him with the courage to defy imperial orders. The Christian Church became his real fatherland, more important to him than the Roman Empire and all that it represented.

**Proletarian
origins of
Christianity**

The brilliant culture of the ancient world had been inalienably associated with the life of the ancient city-states. Under the world-wide Roman Empire its roots were destroyed and it began to wither away. The earlier Christians shared very little of this culture, but in the third century they began to know it better. Some Christians wished to receive more education and to associate with educated pagans, or at least to enter into controversy with them. They learned something about the higher levels of pagan culture, finding much to admire and much that they considered useful. At the same time new sorts of converts began entering the church. Pagans of culture and refinement, disgusted with the imperial system, began seeking refuge in Christianity. Of course the new convert did not abandon or forget all that he had learned in his pagan days, even though his conversion might indicate a deep change of heart. He brought much of the higher

**Pagan
culture
absorbed**

thought and culture of paganism into Christianity with him, just as earlier converts had brought with them much from the oriental mystery religions, and just as the peasants converted in the fifth and sixth centuries merely gave new names to the old neolithic festivals in honor of ancient spirits and gods, continuing to observe them as before.

**Christianity
and the
best of
antiquity**

Christianity thus absorbed the best of pagan culture and perpetuated the noblest ideals of the ancient world. Even in the third and fourth centuries the best Christians resembled the stalwart heroes of Greece and Rome more than their pagan contemporaries did. Tertullian differed from Cato the Censor, to be sure, but not so much as did Septimius Severus. Cyprian resembled Cicero more, and possessed a larger share of the old Roman virtues, than did Decius or Valerian. Augustine was a better Platonist than Plotinus. Christianity absorbed the Roman world as well as converting it, and it immortalized the best of pagan antiquity along with its own distinctive Gospel.

VII

Santa Sophia, Constantinople (*Exing Gallows*)



BYZANTIUM AND ISLAM

THE EASTERN EMPIRE—THE RISE OF ISLAM—
THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Byzantium		Islam	Western Europe	
330	Constantine founds Constantinople		400–500	Germanic kingdoms in the West
527–565	Justinian		533–555	Justinian reconquers the West
		570	568	Lombards in Italy
610–641	Heraclius	622		
		632		
600–650	South Slavs occupy Balkan peninsula	632–661		
673–678	Arabs attack Constantinople	661–750	711	Moslems occupy Spain
			732	Battle of Tours
717–820	Isaurian emperors; iconoclasts	750–1258	751	Lombards take Ravenna
		785–809	800	Charlemagne emperor
		813–833	827	Moslems take Sicily
865	Cyril and Methodius			
867–1057	Macedonian emperors	756–1031	900	Magyar invasions
900–1018	Bulgarian Empire		962	Holy Roman Empire
990	Conversion of Russ			
1054	Final schism of Eastern and Western Churches	1055	1085	Toledo regained by Christians
		1096–1099	1100–1200	Translations into Latin from Arabic
		1189–1193		
1204	Fourth Crusade	1219–1281		
1204–1261	Latin Kingdom at Constantinople	1258		
1261–1453	Paleologue emperors	1300		
1331–1389	Serbian power in Balkans	1380–1405		
		1401		
1354	Turks enter Europe			
1453	Fall of Constantinople; end of Byzantine Empire	1451	1492	Fall of Granada, last Moslem post in Spain
		1520–1566		

18. THE EASTERN EMPIRE

CONSTANTINE was one of the world's great revolutionists. He consciously and deliberately rejected the system which he found prevailing throughout Diocletian's empire, and he energetically set himself to creating a new social order. His adoption of Christianity as the state religion and his transference of the imperial capital to Constantinople were only the two most spectacular and the most famous of his many reforms. Nevertheless, the cultural traditions of the ancient world were so tenacious that the importance of his innovations did not become apparent at once, and at least two centuries elapsed before the new social order showed all its characteristic features.

Constantine's revolutionary activity

The new empire that Constantine created and the new civilization that emerged from his reforms are commonly called "Byzantine," because Byzantium was the ancient city whose site he selected for his new capital—the "New Rome," later known as Constantinople. Here the Byzantine emperors ruled for more than a thousand years, claiming to be the lawful successors of Augustus and the legitimate rulers of whatever lands the Caesars had once held. As a matter of fact, however, the new Germanic kingdoms of the West were so firmly established during the greater part of this long period that their rulers could afford to find it amusing rather than insulting when Byzantine legalists haughtily treated them as mere usurpers. The Byzantine emperors actually ruled only the eastern half of the earlier Roman Empire, and usually they ruled only a small part of that eastern half.

The Byzantine Empire

Byzantine civilization, like Byzantine rule, was limited to the Greek East. The eastern provinces of the Roman Empire had always been distinct from the western, culturally if not constitutionally, and after

Separation of East from West

the founding of Constantinople the cleft separating them rapidly grew wider. Though the Byzantine court and army continued to use Latin until the seventh century, they were Greek in spirit long before they officially adopted the Greek tongue. Communication between East and West declined during the fourth century, and in the fifth century knowledge of the Greek language largely disappeared in Rome and the West. The peoples of the eastern provinces never had studied Latin very assiduously, and even in the fifth century it was not easy to find an able Latin interpreter in Constantinople. The old Roman Empire had split in two, with the dividing line at the Adriatic Sea, and thereafter the Greek-speaking East followed its own course, culturally as well as politically.

Barbarian inroads

We have already seen that during the fifth century practically all of Rome's western provinces fell into the hands of Germanic invaders—Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Vandals, Burgundians, Franks, Anglo-Saxons, and others—and that these barbarians set up independent kingdoms in what had once been Roman territory (see page 243). The eastern provinces of the Empire were more fortunate, but they too were often menaced by barbarian invaders. On several occasions Germanic tribes ravaged the Balkan area, penetrating even into southern Greece, but peace with Persia (which was then being attacked vigorously from the north by central Asiatic nomads, akin to the Huns) protected the rich provinces of Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt. Industry and commerce declined, to be sure, but economic conditions throughout the East remained vastly superior to those prevailing in the West.

Justinian

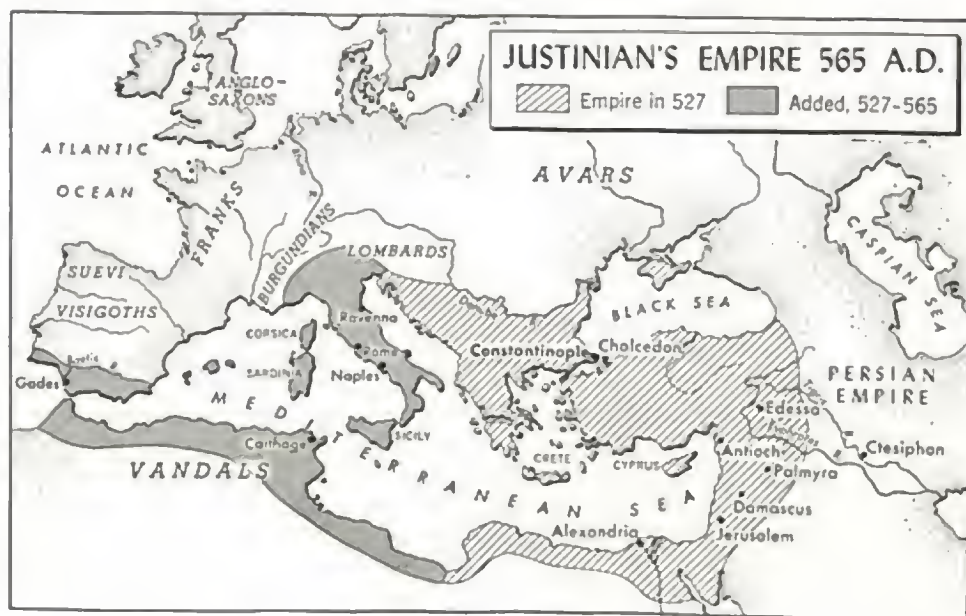
Justinian

Such was the sad state of affairs when an ambitious and energetic emperor at Constantinople decided that the time had come to restore the Roman Empire of former days. This emperor was Justinian I (527–565). Born in 483, he was the nephew of an illiterate but able barbarian whom the army made emperor in 518. Justinian himself received an excellent education, and he had a large share in the government under his uncle. He became the second founder of the Byzantine system, scarcely less significant in its history than Constantine himself. Coming after two hundred years of experimentation, when the basic innovations had been tested by long experience, he devoted his great energy and administrative talent to bringing the Roman Empire of his day into conformity with his ideal of what it

ought to be. His tasks were not easy, but his successes were remarkable.

The first of Justinian's great projects was the reconquest of the West. The Vandals in northern Africa, whose pirates had closed the western Mediterranean to Byzantine shipping, were the first to fall. Justinian's general Belisarius regained Carthage in 533; all North Africa and Sicily were soon in his hands; and in 536 he proceeded to Naples. As Italy was stoutly defended by the Ostrogoths from their capital at Ravenna, its conquest was no easy matter, and not until 555 did Justinian's power reach north to the Alps. Meantime civil dissension among the Visigoths had enabled the emperor to reoccupy southern and eastern Spain (551). Nearly all the Mediterranean basin once more was in Roman hands. The Persians, under the rule of Chosroes I (531-579), had by now resumed their wars with the Roman Empire. They overran the rich province of Syria and wore out several valuable Roman armies before they consented to an armistice (557) and signed a precarious peace (562). Even the Danube frontier was crossed by barbarians on more than one occasion. Justinian's perseverance eventually triumphed, however, and in his last days he could boast that he ruled Rome's ancient empire—even though he had not regained Britain, Gaul, the provinces on the upper Danube, or northern Spain.

*His
victories*



**Church
unity**

Justinian's program of domestic reform was equally ambitious and much more novel. He summed up this program in a famous phrase, "One empire, one church, one law." His codification of Roman law was quickly accomplished (see page 216), but the reestablishment of church unity proved to be more difficult. It required delicate negotiations, both with the pope in Rome, who had only recently made peace with the patriarch of Constantinople after many mutual recriminations, and also with numerous heretics in Syria and Egypt. The favor of the pope was regained, but the heretics remained obdurate. Justinian set himself up as the final arbiter of theological truth, but unfortunately he could not even induce his wife to accept his decisions on fundamental matters. She persisted in heresy all her days, aiding and abetting fellow heretics as best she could. In fact, Justinian himself fell into heresy in his later years.

**Caesaro-
papism**

Justinian also undertook to rule the church with an iron hand. He was not completely successful, but he firmly established the system, vaguely foreshadowed by Constantine himself, that is now called Caesaropapism. The head of the state became an autocrat dominating both temporal and spiritual matters, and acting as both Caesar and pope. Justinian further showed his enthusiasm for the religious unity of his empire by closing the pagan schools in Athens (529) and driving the last Platonic philosophers to Persia. His gifts to the church were numerous, and among them the most famous was the magnificent Church of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia or, in Italian, Santa Sophia) at Constantinople. This building is perhaps the world's finest example of Byzantine architecture. It is interesting to note that the religious policy of Chosroes, the contemporary king of Persia, closely paralleled that of Justinian: Chosroes' zeal for Zoroastrian orthodoxy equaled Justinian's for Christian orthodoxy, and he practiced a sort of Zoroastrian Caesaropapism.

**His
failure**

As Justinian's constant wars had bankrupted the Empire, his successors lacked the means to hold what he had won. Only a few years after his death the Lombards occupied most of Italy (568-572), and the last imperial troops were driven from Spain in 612. Barbarians from the north again crossed the Danube into the Balkans, and the Persians resumed their aggressions. Realizing that the strength of the Empire lay in the East, the imperial authorities decided to hold their Asiatic provinces at any cost but to let the others go if necessary. Even this limited defense proved too much for the treasury, however, and exorbitant taxation drew groans even from the richest provinces.

Early in the seventh century a general named Heraclius (610-641) seized power, and the first years of his reign witnessed an unprecedented series of disasters. An able and aggressive Persian king, Chosroes II (590-628), took Antioch (611), Damascus (613), and Jerusalem (614), and even carried off the patriarch of Jerusalem and what was supposed to be the True Cross. As this True Cross, unearthed some three centuries before by the mother of Constantine, was regarded as the holiest of all the relics in Christendom, its loss to the infidels spread despair over the Christian world. Five years later Persian armies entered Alexandria (619). Meantime hordes of Asiatic nomads, known as Avars, were again invading the Balkans and they besieged Constantinople itself in 626. At the same time, Chosroes made a quick dash across Asia Minor and entered Chaleedon, on the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus opposite Constantinople. The capital itself was not taken, however, and this supreme effort so debilitated the Persians that they were incapable of further fighting. Seizing the offensive, Heraclius carried the war into Persia, defeated the king's army near Nineveh, and sacked his palace at Ctesiphon. Soon thereafter Chosroes was murdered by his son (628), who purchased peace by surrendering all the territories his father had won and returning the True Cross. Heraclius was then able to devote thirteen years to domestic reforms which eventually put the Empire on its feet once more.

Heraclius

These long wars left both Byzantines and Persians bankrupt and exhausted, an easy prey to the followers of Mohammed who were then storming up out of the Arabian peninsula. As these Arabs and their coreligionists were destined to be Byzantium's principal rivals throughout the remainder of her history, and finally to be her conquerors, we must turn our attention to them and especially to their religion, which is called Islam or, more commonly though less correctly, Mohammedanism.

Exhaustion

19. THE RISE OF ISLAM

Arabia

THE Arabian peninsula is largely a desert, of little economic value. Various tribes of nomads, called "bedouin," earned a scanty existence by pasturing sheep and camels, but the peninsula was always overpopulated, and its peoples were often forced to seek new homes in the neighboring countries. Even in the fifth and sixth centuries these migrating bedouin had greatly disturbed both Romans and Persians. But not all Arabs were bedouin. Along the western edge of the peninsula, not far from the Red Sea, were villages and cities inhabited by farmers and traders. At the extreme south, near the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb where the Red Sea joins the Indian Ocean, lies the land of Yemen, famous for its incense and spices. It was the ancient Sheba, whose queen is mentioned in the Old Testament, and which the Romans called *Arabia Felix* ("Araby the Blest"). From ancient times Yemen had been an important commercial center, visited by caravans from afar.

Mecca

The region now known as the Hejaz, north of Yemen along the eastern shore of the Red Sea, is in itself one of the most unimpressive parts of the peninsula, but through it passed the trade routes connecting Yemen with Syria and Egypt. To avoid the intolerable heat of the coastlands, the principal road ran several miles inland, winding its way through rocky and mountainous country. It was regularly traveled by Arab traders, and along it lay important towns, the chief of which was Mecca. This famous city owed its importance, and perhaps even its existence, first to its copious water supply and secondly to its Kaaba—a temple, or perhaps a simple enclosure, built around a large black stone, which was visited by pilgrims from all parts of Arabia. Mecca and the Kaaba had from time im-

memorial been under the protection of the Koreish, the Arab tribe of which Mohammed was a member.

Little is known of the religion of the Arabs in the days before Mohammed. They were polytheists, each tribe having its own gods, but these deities had gradually been amalgamated, and in recent times there had been a tendency to revere one god, Allah, above all others. Jews living in Arabian cities, especially Medina some two hundred miles north of Mecca, had spread a knowledge of Judaism and even won a few converts, while Abyssinian Christians had introduced a heretical form of Christianity. There are also a few traces of Zoroastrian ideas, but it is not clear whether they were brought to Arabia by Zoroastrians from Persia and Mesopotamia or, as seems more likely, by Jews as a part of Judaism.

**Pre-
Islamic
religion**

Mohammed

Mohammed was born at Mecca about the year 570. From an early age he accompanied caravans as a camel boy, and upon reaching maturity he became business manager for a wealthy widow named Khadija, whom he eventually married (about 595). His economic position being thus assured, Mohammed began devoting much time to religious speculation, often withdrawing into the desert, and about 610 he came to believe that the Angel Gabriel himself had brought him special messages from Allah. He continued to receive these messages throughout his life, and they are now preserved in the Koran, the sacred book of Islam.

**The
Prophet's
early life**

At first Mohammed mentioned his visions only to a few intimate friends, but about 613 he began to preach publicly, and even at this early date he proclaimed the two fundamental doctrines of Islam: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet!" He demanded that every man submit himself to the will of Allah as expounded by the Prophet. The Arabic word for "submit," *islam*, is still the official name of his religion, and a man actually so submitting himself is designated by the participial form of the same verb, *moslem*. This preaching aroused great opposition at Mecca, and especially from his own tribe, whose members profited greatly from the traditional pilgrimages to the Kaaba. They became so troublesome that Mohammed decided to shake the dust of the city from his feet and went to Medina (622). This flight from Mecca is commonly called the *Hegira*. Moslems consider it the crucial event in Moham-

**The Hegira
(622)**

med's life and count years after it, just as Christians reckon time before and after the birth of Christ.¹

**Mohammed
at Medina**

As Medina was just then being torn between two rival factions, its citizens invited Mohammed to become their ruler. He accepted the invitation, and the city (formerly called Yathrib) has ever since been known as "The City of the Prophet"—*Medinat an-nabi*, or simply, Medina. Mohammed's views expanded in many directions during his years there. Soon after arriving, he made the acquaintance of various Jews, from whom he learned something of a higher religion. At first he believed his religion to be identical with Judaism and hoped to make Jerusalem his religious capital, but when the Jews refused to accept him, he turned against them bitterly. Nevertheless, he incorporated many Jewish ideas into his new religion. At the same time, his tasks as ruler of Medina were developing his latent statesmanship, and he presently began expressing the opinion that all the world should become one vast theocratic state ruled by Allah and his Prophet. Later legend declared that he even went so far as to send letters inviting the Roman and Persian emperors, Heraclius and Chosroes, to "submit" to Allah. When he found it difficult to finance his government at Medina, Mohammed decided to punish the Meccans for their unbelief by raiding their caravans. In the pitched battles that followed, he and his associates usually were victorious, and thus arose the idea of a *jihad*, or holy war against infidels, which later played so great a part in spreading Moslem civilization.

**His return
to Mecca**

When the Meccans were at last ready to make peace, Mohammed granted them various concessions. He insisted that all idols be removed from the Kaaba, but he allowed the black stone to remain. Pilgrimages might continue as before, but the pilgrims must become Moslems. In 630 Mohammed returned to Mecca in triumph. As news of this victory spread through Arabia, sheiks from all parts of the peninsula hastened to "submit." A year later Mohammed led a great pilgrimage to the Kaaba, after which he returned to Medina, where he died on June 8, 632.

¹ Moslem books in Western languages use the abbreviation A.H. (*Anno Hegirae*, "Year of the Hegira"), much as Christians use the abbreviation A.D., counting the year 1 A.H. from the day Mohammed supposedly left Mecca, July 16, 622 A.D. Mohammed rejected the solar year then in general use and returned to the old lunar calendar of 354 and a fraction days. As each lunar year begins about eleven days earlier than the preceding according to the solar calendar, a whole year is thus gained in about 32½ solar years. The year 1375 A.H. began on August 20, 1955 A.D., which, according to our solar reckoning, was only 1333 years, one month, and four days after the Hegira.

It is not easy to make up one's mind about Mohammed's character. As has been the case with most famous religious leaders, his followers have surrounded him with a myth and a halo, thereby raising him out of the class of ordinary mortals. His erities sometimes go to the opposite extreme. In particular, they often question the reality of his visions. In his later years Mohammed may have invented visions to suit an occasion, but there seems to be no valid reason for doubting the early ones. He was an impulsive enthusiast, an ardent hater, and a dreamer who may very well have thought he heard the voice of Gabriel. His responsibilities at Medina taught him to calculate, to dissemble, and to use the sword to supplement the force of Allah's word, but he was always a brave soldier and a high idealist, and he succeeded to a remarkable degree in inspiring his followers with each of these noble virtues.

*His
character*

THE CALIPHS AND THEIR CONQUESTS

Mohammed had made no arrangements for a successor at the time of his death, so his closest associates assembled at Medina to select a new leader for the Moslem community. The leader thus chosen was called the Caliph, or "Successor." Upon the death of the first caliph, similar elections were held until four leaders had extended their rule over a period of almost thirty years. These four caliphs were Abu Bakr (632-634), Omar (634-644), Othman (644-656), and Ali (656-661). Each of the four had been closely associated with Mohammed before the Hegira, and each was related to him by marriage: after the death of his wife Khadija, Mohammed had married daughters of the first two, and the last two had married daughters of Mohammed and Khadija. Ali was also a cousin of Mohammed, the son of an uncle who had cared for the young Prophet after the death of his parents.

*The four
caliphs
(632-661)*

Ali was chosen by the religious extremists because of his blood relationship with the Prophet, but though he was extremely ambitious and rather unscrupulous, he was not an able ruler and he soon was murdered. A kinsman of Othman then seized power as caliph and founded the Ommiad dynasty that ruled until 750. The Abbassid dynasty, descended from another uncle of the Prophet, then held power until 1258. During the greater part of this period, however, one or more rival dynasties contested its claims. As these successive dynasties of caliphs provide a convenient framework upon which to

*Ommiads
and
Abbassids*

arrange the rest of early Moslem history, we shall hereafter divide this history into three great periods: the first four "orthodox" caliphs, 632-661; the Ommiads, 661-750; and the Abbassids, 750-1258.

**Early
Moslem
conquests**

The death of Mohammed encouraged several Arab sheiks to withdraw their recent "submissions," and Abu Bakr's first task was to bring them back into line. In this he was eminently successful, and within a year all Arabia was again Moslem, this time permanently so. Shortly before his death, Mohammed had been planning a raid into the territory east of the Jordan River. Abu Bakr carried out the proposed expedition, after which he sent an army against the Persians in Mesopotamia. His successor, Omar, directed astonishingly successful campaigns against both Persia and Byzantium. Moslem armies smashed the Persian forces and entered Mosul in 641, and within ten years they had occupied the whole of Persia. The conquest of Syria was even easier. Damascus was taken in 635; the coastal cities from Tyre to Antioch, and several inland cities such as Aleppo, fell in 636; Jerusalem followed in 638; and last of all, Caesarea was taken in 640. Other Arab forces, entering Egypt in 639, completed their conquest of the country by taking Alexandria in 642. Within a year or two they had occupied Libya and Tripoli. Turning to the sea, other Moslems captured the island of Cyprus in 649, and a smashing victory over the Byzantine navy gave them command of the eastern Mediterranean (655). In the course of these few years the first generation of Moslems conquered and united the greater part of the Near East. By thus restoring it to rule by Orientals, they avenged the victories of Alexander the Great after almost a thousand years.

**Reasons
for easy
victories**

Wonder naturally arises as to how a relatively small number of Arabs could make such sweeping conquests in so short a time. Great credit must of course be given to the enthusiasm of the Moslems, now united and inspired by their new religious faith, but this is not the whole story. Both Persians and Byzantines had worn themselves out by long years of fighting, and the Arab attackers caught them unprepared on a new front. Moreover, the Arabs fell upon a Persia already rent by civil war (eight kings had seized power and been overthrown during the five years separating the death of Chosroes II in 628 from the first Moslem attack in 633), and many factions preferred the Arabs to their Persian rivals.

**Many
Christians
converted
to Islam**

The situation inside the Byzantine Empire was even more complicated. For many centuries the descendants of the various peoples conquered by Alexander the Great had been growing increasingly restless under alien rule. In this theologically-minded age, they often

showed their hostility to Constantinople by supporting various Christian heresies. Conversion to Islam then became an even more pointed way of defying Byzantine orthodoxy, and submission came the more easily because the heretical doctrines, deeply influenced by ancient oriental traditions, often resembled the teachings of Mohammed more closely than they did the orthodoxy which Constantinople was vainly trying to impose upon its subjects. There are Christian writers who solemnly maintain that all Islam is just one more Christian heresy—though it would be truer to regard both religions as heresies of Judaism. The caliphs encouraged conversion by relieving all who became Moslems from tribute, yet they tolerated Judaism and Christianity, seldom invoking the sword as an argument in theological disputation. Countless Orientals therefore remained true to Christianity for several generations, and large groups of oriental Christians (called Maronites) still exist today. Nevertheless, we have here one of the few cases in history in which large numbers of persons have deserted Christianity for a rival religion.

Establishing their capital at Damascus, the Omniad caliphs continued the conquests of their predecessors. In the northeast they added the modern Afghanistan and the region beyond the Oxus with such ancient cities as Bokhara and Samarkand (709-712), and they pushed their frontier eastward across the Indus River (712). In Asia Minor they drove the Byzantines from all territory east of the Taurus Mountains. But their most important conquests were in the West. A series of successful raids in North Africa carried their power to the Atlantic, and by capturing Carthage in 698 they deprived Byzantium of its last foothold in Africa. Spain was invaded by a local Moslem leader from Morocco (711), and as the Visigothic kingdom had long since fallen into decay, the peninsula was easily occupied by the invaders. Within a few years only the northwestern corner of Spain remained in Christian hands. Crossing the Pyrenees for the first time in 720, the invaders raided southern and central France until they were defeated in a battle near Tours in 732. They then retired to Spain, parts of which they held for more than seven hundred years, and where they built up a famous Islamic civilization. Their capital at Cordova became the most civilized city in western Europe, a beacon of light and learning for the whole Western world.

The Abbassids transferred their capital from Damascus to Baghdad, a city on the Tigris in Mesopotamia (762). From the cultural point of view, the next century or two were the most brilliant in Moslem history, but territorial expansion almost came to an end. After two

**Omniad
conquests**

**Grandeur
and decline
under the
Abbassids**



MOSQUE AT DAMASCUS. Part of this mosque was originally a Christian church, built on the site of a pagan temple, but taken over by an Ommlad caliph, converted into a mosque, and expanded in the eighth century. It was badly restared after a fire in the nineteenth century. (Galloway)

great caliphs (Harun al-Rashid, 786-809, and al-Mamun, 813-833), political decline set in and the empire quickly disintegrated. The Spanish Moslems had not recognized the Abbassids, and after 756 they were governed by a member of the Ommiad family who had escaped massacre at the time of his dynasty's downfall. This man and his successors called themselves emirs (military leaders) at first, but in 929 they assumed the title "Caliph," thereby setting themselves up as independent rivals of the caliphs in Baghdad. North Africa fell to two native dynasties before 800, one of which presently conquered Sicily and Sardinia (827). Soon after 868 the governor of Egypt became virtually an independent sovereign, and presently he added most of Syria to his domain. The greater part of Arabia then fell to another dynasty (900). In the course of the tenth century north Africa and Egypt were again united under the Fatimid dynasty—so called because it claimed descent from Mohammed's daughter, Fatima. This dynasty ruled Syria and the Hejaz as well, and Cairo became the most brilliant capital in the Moslem world. The Fatimids too called themselves caliphs. The eastern and northeastern provinces (in India and Afghanistan) had long since broken away from the Abbassids, while between 867 and 874 most of Persia fell to rebels. After about 900, therefore, the Abbassids held little more than southern Iraq (the environs of Baghdad) and a corner of Persia. In fact, they usually were virtual prisoners of their Persian viziers or their Turkish bodyguards. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, Moslem leaders from Turkestan conquered much of India, and others extended these Asiatic conquests in the sixteenth century.

Though the political unity of the Moslem world was thus destroyed by A.D. 900, its component parts were still united by their common culture and their common devotion to Islam. We have seen that long before this time many Christians had come to regard their church, or Christendom, as their true fatherland, attaching their patriotic loyalty to it rather than to the Roman Empire or its various successor states (see pages 274 and 293). Similarly Moslems tended to attach their patriotic loyalty to what they called *Dar al-Islam* (the whole Islamic community, or the world of Moslem civilization), and to regard their temporal rulers as being of rather secondary importance.

Dar al-Islam

THE ISLAMIC RELIGION

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, is a book religion; that is to say, its fundamental teachings are contained in a sacred book which

*The
Koran*

the faithful esteem as the revealed word of God. For Moslems this sacred book is the Koran, which professes to be the word of Allah, revealed to Mohammed through the Angel Gabriel. Tradition teaches that the oracles were written down as soon as they had been delivered, or at any rate during Mohammed's lifetime, and that after his death they were collected by his secretary. Their present form and arrangement, however, were determined in the days of the Caliph Othman, who ordered a new edition of the Koran shortly after 650. At present there are 114 *suras*, or chapters, each of which is an independent oracle composed in rhythmic prose. Except for the first *sura*, all are now arranged simply in decreasing order of length. Some *suras* clearly date from the Meccan period, others from the days at Medina, but not much more can be said with certainty about the origin of this famous book.

*Its
contents*

Some of the earlier *suras* consist of vehement and picturesque denunciations of the Prophet's enemies, or of lurid descriptions of the hell to which he consigned them, while others give equally vivid pictures of the paradise which he promised to believers. The elaborate rules and regulations of later *suras* sometimes reflect Mohammed's growing concern with matters of government and administration. Some *suras* are hymns of praise, reminiscent of the Psalms of the Old Testament; others are narratives based, in a few cases, on Bible stories; others contain arguments on theological topics; others consist of moral maxims or ethical teachings; and many are eloquent exhortations to belief in Allah and his Prophet. In fact, the contents of the Koran are so varied that, at first glance, a Westerner is likely to consider the book utterly chaotic. Yet for many centuries devout Moslems have found in it the beginning and end of all wisdom. The noble first *sura*, often compared to the Christian Lord's Prayer, is recited countless times daily in public and private devotions. It is worth quoting in full, even though no translation can adequately reproduce the rhythm and exaltation of the Arabic verses:

Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!
The compassionate, the merciful!
King on the day of reckoning!
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help.
Guide Thou us on the straight path,
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious;—with whom Thou
art not angry, and who go not astray.

[Rodwell tr.]

When Moslems began using the Koran as a guide to life they quickly encountered difficulties. Sometimes passages composed at different times and on different occasions contradicted each other, and questions sometimes arose to which the Koran provided no answer. Men tried to solve these problems in the light of remarks allegedly made by Mohammed or of his actions in similar cases. Traditions regarding the Prophet and his sayings were therefore collected and these books of tradition (*hadith*) came to enjoy an authority second only to that of the Koran itself. And finally, Moslems have always done many things which neither the Koran nor tradition explicitly commanded; such practices are said to be authorized by general consent. These various teachings were eventually amalgamated into a coherent system called the *sunna* ("orthodoxy"). While this orthodoxy teaches that Islam has presented a rigid and unalterable system of faith and morals from the very first, such is not the case. Being a living religion, Islam has absorbed countless doctrines and practices from its rivals during its long history, and it has often invented new ones, but theologians have always managed to reconcile these accretions with the Koran or with tradition.

**The sunna
(orthodoxy)**

Theology and Religious Practice

From the days of Mohammed himself, Islamic theology has centered around six great points. (1) *Monotheism*: "There is no God but Allah!" Mohammed recognized the Jews as fellow monotheists, but he regarded the Christian doctrine of the Trinity as a blasphemous denial of the divine unity. (2) *Angels*. Mohammed believed in a hierarchy of lesser spirits, servants of Allah. He, like the Christians, took this theory of angels from the Jews, who in turn had taken it from the Persians. Mohammed also believed in a Satan who ruled over hosts of evil spirits (*jinn*s). (3) *Prophets*. Mohammed accepted the Hebrew prophets (among whom he numbered Jesus) as authorized spokesmen of God, but he proclaimed himself the last and most important of the series. (4) *Revelations*. The Koran must be regarded as the final word of God's revelation, but Mohammed accepted the Jewish and Christian Scriptures as lesser revelations, and from them he derived his theories regarding creation and world history. (5) *Heaven and hell*. There would be a Day of Resurrection and Judgment, after which the just would be sent to enjoy the pleasures of paradise while unbelievers and the wicked suffered in the fires of

**Islamic
doctrine**

hell. (6) *Fate*. Each man's fate, or lot in life (*kismet*), was determined by the inexorable decrees of Allah. Though these six fundamental doctrines have always remained the basis of Islamic theology, Mohammed never set them forth systematically. During the next three or four centuries, however, Moslem theologians worked them up into elaborate systems of theology that undertook to explain everything in heaven and on earth.

**Heresies
and sects**

It was said that Mohammed once prophesied that his followers would fall into seventy-three sects and that in the end seventy-two would be destroyed while one was saved. A partial fulfillment of the first half of this prophecy soon appeared, and though pious writers liked to limit Moslem sects to the number predicted by the Prophet, it actually rose much higher. As might be expected in a religion where church and state were closely entwined, the early divisions of Islam were at once political and theological. They began with the usurpation of the Ommiads after the murder of Ali (661). Devout partisans of Ali not only insisted that the caliphate should be held only by descendants of Mohammed—that is, of Ali and Fatima—but also accused the Omniad faction of adding to the true doctrine of Mohammed. In the end they rejected the whole body of Islamic tradition. Islam was thus rent asunder, with the adherents of the Omniads called Sunnites (from *sunna*, the orthodox tradition about Mohammed) while their opponents were Shi'ites (from *shi'ah*, "sect"). This division has persisted down to the present day. The Sunnites are much the larger group, and call themselves "orthodox," while the Shi'ites have quarreled about many things and have divided into several minor sects. The Shi'ites introduced a new enthusiasm into the religion, they produced more fanatics than did their adversaries, they criticized the scholasticism of the Sunnites, often taking up mysticism instead, but they did not often win large numbers of followers. Nevertheless, the Shi'ites are now the major faction in Persia.

**Religious
duties of
Moslems**

The religious life of Moslems revolves largely around various practices which are expected of everyone. (1) *Recitation of the creed*: "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his Prophet!" (2) *Prayer*. Every Moslem must pray five times daily, facing toward Mecca, after washing himself with water or, if that is not available, with sand. The prayers take various forms, but they usually include reciting the creed and the first *sura* of the Koran. (3) *Fasting*. During the month of Ramadan no Moslem may either eat or drink between

sunrise and sunset. (4) *Alms*. At an early date alms were divided into two sorts, imposed and voluntary, the former becoming a sort of tax paid to the state and used for religious purposes. (5) *Pilgrimage*. Every Moslem is expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his life. Of course so long a trip is out of the question for the great majority of Moslems, but thousands of pilgrims still visit Mecca every year. (6) To these five duties Moslems sometimes add that of taking part in a *jihad*, or holy war against the infidels, should one occur.

In addition to imposing these major obligations, Mohammed laid down countless rules for lesser matters. He tolerated the old practice of polygamy, but a man might take only as many wives as he could support, and in no case more than four. Divorce was made easy for men but impossible for women, though men were often deterred by the law ordering that they return her dowry to a divorced wife. Adultery was severely punished. Slavery was tolerated, but various laws mitigated the lot of slaves. Moslems were forbidden to drink fermented liquor or to eat pork, and the ancient practice of circumcision was retained.

*Lesser
laws*

Mohammed made no provision for a professional clergy, but soon the mullahs (teachers of Islamic law and dogma) attained a position approximating that of the medieval Christian clergy. Every town had one or more mosques, where the faithful assembled on Fridays for public prayer. Their prayers were led by an official called an imam, who also preached a sermon. This imam, regarded as a representative of the caliph, was paid a small salary from funds contributed to the mosque by pious persons; often he was also a schoolteacher or other public servant. The muezzin chanted the call to prayer five times daily from a minaret of the mosque.

*Mullahs
and imams*

In the early days, Islam advanced hand in hand with political power and, until the decline of the Abbassids, religion did not go in advance of empire. In more recent times the situation has changed, with Islam making many converts in China and the Malay Peninsula, and even reaching the Philippines, without prior military conquest. Islam has also spread to central Africa, where its successes in the twentieth century are said to fill the hearts of Christian missionaries with dismay. Islam is by no means a dead religion. According to the most reliable estimates, there are over 300 million Moslems in the world today, as opposed to about 750 million Christians. If judged by numbers alone, Islam is the world's second religion.

*Islam
today*

MOSLEM CIVILIZATION

**A new
oriental
civilization**

The Arabs who came out of the desert in the days of Abu Bakr and Omar were largely illiterate bedouin. Two centuries later the caliphs at Baghdad ruled over what was then the world's most highly civilized state. The Arabs had learned much during these two hundred years, but not so much as the contrast here suggested might imply, and they always were absorbers rather than the creators of civilization. True Arabs made up only a small fraction of the caliph's subjects, and their contribution to the culture of his empire was correspondingly small. This brilliant new Moslem civilization was the creation of all the varied peoples of the Near East. Syrians and Egyptians traced their cultural roots back to ancient Egypt and Babylonia, in spite of the veneer of Hellenistic civilization imposed upon them since Alexander the Great; Iranians and Iraqis showed a similar veneer of Persian culture covering more ancient oriental foundations. Now that the peoples of the Near East were again master in their own house, long-submerged oriental features of their culture once more predominated. Cultural leaders did not reject the heritage of Greece and Persia, however, and to the resulting cultural amalgam true Arabs contributed three elements, namely, political unity, the Islamic religion, and the Arabic language.

**Political
unity**

The area of the Moslem world, extending from the Indus River westward to the Atlantic Ocean, was larger than the Roman Empire in its most glorious days, and its culture was more homogeneous than that of Rome's varied empire had ever been. There were frequent wars on the frontiers, to be sure, as well as occasional rebellions at home, and perhaps the roads and towns were not so well policed as they had been in Roman times, yet a higher degree of peace and economic prosperity prevailed under the caliphs than the Western world had known since Rome's "Good Emperors" six hundred years before.

**Cultural
unity**

Cultural unity was promoted by the law of Islam requiring pilgrimage to Mecca. Every year thousands of pilgrims visited the Holy City from every Moslem country, taking home with them new ideas of every sort. Pilgrimage thus became a great educational and unifying experience. As Islamic law forbade translating the Koran into a foreign language, all good Moslems had to know some Arabic, and this remarkably flexible language soon proved that it could meet the

requirements of an elaborate and highly developed civilization. A Moslem could travel from one end of his world to the other with this one language, whereas a Roman traveler would have required both Greek and Latin.

The caliphs and the aristocrats surrounding them were proud of their Arab blood, but they conveniently forgot that their mothers and grandmothers had usually been harem slaves of non-Arab origin. Thus the mother of Harun al-Rashid was a Persian slave, as was the mother of his son al-Mamun, perhaps the most glorious of the Abbassids: even if his grandfather had been a pure Arab (which he was not), al-Mamun would have been only one-quarter Arab and three-quarters Persian. Soldiers, traders, and scholars, who traveled freely over the whole Moslem world, were of equally varied racial origin, but the peasantry was little influenced by the coming of Islam.

Likewise the political policies of the caliphs were Arab only in a diluted way. Omar and Othman were fighters and leaders, who had neither training nor experience in governing foreign peoples. They therefore continued whatever local government they found in conquered countries, usually leaving the former bureaucrats in office. When the Ommiads were ruling from Damascus, they absorbed much of the old Byzantine system, and similarly in Baghdad the Abbassids fell under powerful Persian influence. In each case the overwhelming majority of those going through the routine of government were non-Arabs who continued to rule as before the conquest. It thus came about that while the first caliphs were democratic leaders of Arab tribesmen, their successors quickly forgot this primitive democracy. The caliph Harun al-Rashid (of *Arabian Nights* fame) is still taken as a classic example of the aloof oriental despot. Surrounded by a court of sycophants and eunuchs and a harem of beautiful slave girls adept at intrigue, perfidy, and poison, he ruled through a vizier over an abject people with a despotism that could be tempered only by assassination.

The fabulous splendor of Harun al-Rashid's court at Baghdad also bears witness to the wealth of his empire. Agriculture was of course the foundation of its economic life. The rich soils of Mesopotamia and Egypt were again exploited to the fullest extent, with large sums of money devoted to repairing and expanding the irrigation systems. New crops were introduced from India and elsewhere. Some, such as cotton, soon attained wide usage and high economic value while others, such as the citrus fruits, remained luxuries until quite recent

**Fusion
of races**

**Oriental
political
practice**

**Economic
life**

times. The cities of the empire were industrial centers, with textiles taking the lead in economic importance while ironwork and ceramics came close behind. Except for the Aegean and Adriatic seas, the Mediterranean was almost wholly in Moslem hands, a highway for Moslem commerce. Ships and traders followed the coast from Spain along North Africa to Tunis (not far from the ruins of ancient Carthage), Alexandria, and Antioch. Others sailed from the Red Sea, or from Basra on the Persian Gulf, through the Indian Ocean to India or the Malay Peninsula, and occasionally even to China, while still others ventured south along Africa as far as Madagascar. Camel caravans traversed Egypt from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, followed the old trade routes north to Syria, or crossed the desert from Damascus or Aleppo to Mesopotamia and Persia. Others skirted the southern shores of the Caspian and passed through the ancient and famous cities of Merv, Bokhara, and Samarkand on their way to Kashgar, at the western tip of China. Here Moslems traded with Chinese merchants. Midway between Europe and the Far East, Baghdad became famous among the world's wealthiest and most cosmopolitan cities.

Science and Philosophy

Rise of an intellectual class

From the eighth to the tenth or eleventh centuries the Moslem world was very active intellectually, with Baghdad as its great center but with lesser centers scattered over the empire from Cordova to Bokhara. Scholars and learned men were constantly traveling from one center to another, spreading their learning as they went. Educational institutions, however, were rather primitive. Elementary education was left to individual initiative. Young boys were first sent to a local teacher, perhaps an imam, who might teach the elements of reading and writing. Most of them would then be apprenticed to a trade or a profession, but a few ambitious pupils would eagerly seek out teachers with reputations for learning. Moreover, the Abbassid caliphs took an active interest in intellectual matters. Famous observatories were built at Damascus and Baghdad by al-Mamun; scientific societies were founded and subsidized; and finally, toward the middle of the eleventh century, came an institution which has been loosely called the University of Baghdad. Its professors were hired by the state to give public instruction, especially in law and medicine; it made provision for the housing and care of the students; it had a large

library; and it conferred degrees. Similar institutions arose later at Nishapur (Persia), Damascus, Cairo, and elsewhere, and the Fatimids actively encouraged schools in Egypt. A strong intellectual class was thus created.

One of the first tasks of Moslem scholars was to absorb as much as possible of the scientific and philosophical knowledge of their predecessors, both Greeks and Orientals. Their way was prepared by Christians of the Nestorian heresy, who translated Greek books into Syriac, a language akin to Arabic. Then, in the ninth century, the works of Plato and Aristotle, Euclid and Ptolemy, Hippocrates and Galen, and other renowned Greeks were translated into Arabic—often from the Syriac. The most active of the translators was a Nestorian named Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who flourished in the days of al-Mamun. Other works were translated into Arabic from the Persian, still others from Sanskrit. Some Moslem scholars produced huge works of an encyclopedic sort in which they strove to include all learning, thereby preserving a large part of the scientific knowledge acquired in earlier times. Others added greatly to this knowledge, especially in the fields of mathematics, medicine, and geography.

Moslem mathematicians learned from India to use the symbols now called "Arabic numerals," including the use of a cipher for "zero." This invention of the cipher, making it possible to arrange numbers in columns of units, tens, hundreds, etc., has been hailed as one of the great steps forward in the history of arithmetic.² The Moslems also carried further the Greek discoveries in geometry, to which they added plane and spherical trigonometry, and they invented algebra. They also inherited the old oriental interest in astronomy. Having the scientific works of Ptolemy, they knew that the earth is round—which fact was then largely ignored in western Europe—and they accepted the Ptolemaic theory that the earth is the center of the universe, surrounded by spheres containing in turn the moon, the sun, the planets, and the "fixed" stars. They developed the details of this

*Translations
from Greek
into Arabic*

*Moslem
mathe-
matics*

² Imagine a Roman boy adding DCCLVII, MCIX, and CLXXXVIII, and getting as the correct answer MMLIVI! The Greek system of writing numerals was almost as awkward. Greeks and Romans added and subtracted with the aid of an abacus—a frame crossed by several wires along each of which ten counters slid. (The use of this device, incidentally, is not an inconvenient way of adding; a Japanese bank clerk equipped with an abacus once defeated an American with an adding machine in totaling up a huge column of figures.) Multiplying was done by repeated additions, but the division of large numbers was very difficult. Try to divide MMCCCLXIX by DCCCXXIII. It can be done only by guess-work and memory.

system with the aid of their new mathematics, and they compiled numerous astronomical tables which long remained the best in the world.

**Moslem
medicine**

Moslem scientists won their most enduring fame in the field of medicine. At first they depended upon Greek medicine, as transmitted to them by Nestorians, many of whom were excellent physicians themselves and who translated Hippocrates and Galen into Arabic. Becoming the best physicians in the world, Moslems presently produced a large medical literature of their own. High among the famous Moslem physicians stood al-Razi, or in Latin, Rhazes (c. 865-925), who was born in Persia but who became head physician in a large hospital at Baghdad founded by Harun al-Rashid. He wrote many treatises on medical subjects, including an important work on smallpox and measles, and he compiled a huge encyclopedia of medical knowledge which remained standard for several centuries. His greatest successor was Ibn Sina, or in Latin, Avicenna (980-1037), likewise a Persian, who compiled an equally famous medical encyclopedia, *The Canon*, and who also wrote on philosophy and theology.

Geography

Moslems had learned from the Greeks how to determine latitude by sighting the elevation of stars with an astrolabe; from the Chinese they had learned the use of the compass; and their navigators had better maps than were ever made before. Travelers wrote books describing the countries and cities they had visited, which included India and China as well as Christian Europe. Moslem geographers thus had a far wider view of the world than that of their Greek and Roman predecessors or their Christian contemporaries, and their knowledge of it was far more accurate.

**Historical
writing**

At the same time Moslem historians were writing histories, many of which were superior to anything appearing in western Europe during those centuries and a few of which could stand comparison with the works of Greek and Roman writers. The most illustrious of Arabic historians was Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406). Born in Tunis to a family expelled by the Spaniards from Seville, where they had once been members of the Moslem aristocracy, Ibn Khaldun was long in the service of Moslem rulers at Fez, Granada, Damascus, and Cairo, and he passed several years at Oran, where he composed his huge *Universal History*. In the long introduction to this work he set forth his views on how society develops, elaborating a philosophy of history which has received high praise from modern scholars because of its profundity, its comprehensiveness, and the sheer intellectual power

it displays. It has even been rated above anything said on the subject by such ancient writers as Plato, Aristotle, and St. Augustine.

These studies and this new learning often raised grave problems in the minds of devout Moslems. Mohammed and his early disciples knew nothing of such matters, and Islam, like most great religions, has always been bedeviled by ignorant fanatics who insist that divine revelation contains all that men need to know. Moslem scholars and thinkers have always stood in danger of persecution by this rabble. Nevertheless, men made fruitful efforts to harmonize the new learning with the religious truths revealed in the Koran. They started with Aristotle's ideas as set forth in the *Metaphysics*, or perhaps it would be truer to say, with Aristotle's ideas as misunderstood by Porphyry and other Neo-Platonists (see page 256). It was these Moslem writers who first referred to Aristotle as *al-failasuf*, "The Philosopher," an epithet often applied to him by Christians a few centuries later. The most important of the early Moslem philosophers was al-Kindi (born c. 850), one of the few intellectual leaders of Islam who was a true Arab; but the philosopher best known in the West was Ibn Rushd, or in Latin, Averroës (1126-1198), the son of a lawyer in Cordova. Profoundly convinced that there can be no basic contradiction between revealed religion and science, or between faith and reason, Averroës wrote many books attempting to reconcile the two, and in due time we shall see with what care and profit his treatises were studied by Christian theologians in the next century (see page 571).

**Moslem
philos-
ophers**

Unfortunately the Moslems also perpetuated much of the superstition and magic that had been so prevalent in the late Roman Empire, sometimes turning astronomy into astrology, and chemistry into alchemy. Avicenna, al-Kindi, and others of superior intellect fluminated in vain against such superstition, and even today popular belief holds that there is, or ought to be, something "Arabic" about astrology and magic.

**Astrology
and
alchemy**

In pre-Islamic Arabia the poet had been a man of importance whose poems quickly passed from mouth to mouth. Under the Omniads, scholars began to make collections of these early war songs, hunting songs, love songs, elegies, and satires. In later times, new sorts of poetry were introduced, perhaps in imitation of Persian or Indian models, and long ballads were recited by minstrels to the accompaniment of music from a lute or a guitar. But poets never lost their enthusiasm for the pre-Islamic types, and we shall see that the European troubadours learned much from them (page 587).

The poets



GRANADA: ROOM IN THE ALHAMBRA PALACE

**The
Arabian
Nights**

While the storyteller never enjoyed the same high prestige as the poet in Moslem lands, people were always glad to hear stories, and collections of them presently appeared. The collection best known in the West is *The Arabian Nights*. It was compiled in Egypt in the fifteenth century, but many of its stories are very old, some being of Persian, or Indian, or even ancient Egyptian origin. They are permeated with the spirit of Islam, but it is well to remember that their idealization of Harun al-Rashid and the Baghdad of his day exhibits no greater historical accuracy than the novels of Sir Walter Scott (written about 1820) which deal with the Crusades of the twelfth century.

**Arabic
fine arts**

The story of the other Islamic arts is much the same. Moslem architects, for example, began by copying the buildings they found in the lands that had been conquered, but before long they were making additions of their own. Domed Byzantine churches were copied as mosques, but the slender and graceful minarets were soon added. Persian pointed arches grew into the round horseshoe arch. The opportunities of Islamic painters and sculptors were limited, for Moslem tradition taught that Mohammed had been very strict in his interpretation of the Hebrew Second Commandment—"Thou shalt not make unto thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the



GRANADA: GENERALIFE AND GARDEN

earth." Artists might sometimes disregard this commandment in secular art, but they did no very important work. They learned to make pleasing decorations from geometrical figures and inscriptions, however, and thus created the style which we still call "arabesque." Since most Moslems lived not far from the desert, they were likely to consider a garden shaded with fruit trees and cooled with a fountain of water the nearest earthly approach to paradise, and they developed great skill at landscape gardening. Their artistic talents received high expression in the great mosques at Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo, but they may also be seen to advantage in Spain—in the Giralda Tower at Seville, in the great mosque at Cordova, and in the famous Alhambra and Generalife at Granada. Though the latter buildings are rather late (the end of the thirteenth century), they show Moslem architecture, landscaping, and decoration in their most charming forms. Granada is now visited every year by countless pilgrims—romantic pilgrims from America and Europe—especially since Washington Irving captured and immortalized its bewitching beauty in his *Tales of the Alhambra* (1832).

20. THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

**Byzantine
decline
to 700**

THE brilliant achievements of the Moslems should not blind us to the contemporary activities of their Byzantine rivals. These Byzantines had seen bad times in the seventh century, when their richest provinces in Asia and Africa fell to the infidels, and the Balkans were devastated by Slavic invaders. In 700 the imperial authorities held a firm grip only on Thrace and Asia Minor (including Armenia)—or slightly more than the Turkish Republic of today. They kept a looser hold on the Balkans, and in a still looser way they held the Exarchate of Italy—scattered territories including Ravenna, Venice, Rome, the “heel” and “toe” of Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia-Corsica. But mighty Rome’s official successor retained only these few fragments of her world empire.

**The
Macedonian
emperors
(867–1057)**

Nevertheless, the domestic reforms of Heraclius (610–641) presently began to pay dividends, and toward the end of the seventh century Byzantine armies checked the Moslem advance. Arab fleets sailed through the Dardanelles to attack Constantinople annually from 673 to 678 while Arab armies dashed across Asia Minor to besiege the city. The fleet attacked once more in 717, but in every case the attackers were driven away. At the same time the Balkan Peninsula was being reduced to order. During the eighth century and the first half of the ninth, the Empire was distracted by religious controversies, but even these controversies ended (843) just as the decline of the Abbassid caliphate began. During the next two hundred years Constantinople rivaled Baghdad as one of the world’s leading cities, and the Byzantine Empire attained her greatest glory under the Macedonian dynasty of emperors (867–1057). Her armies regained large areas once lost to Moslems in Syria and crushed various





enemies in the Balkans; her traders held their own against Moslem rivals in the Mediterranean; her treasury was full; and her culture attained its most brilliant development.

The dreary chronicle of Byzantium's dynasties and wars need not detain us, but several features of her civilization deserve our attention. This civilization was new and different from that of Greece and Rome, and its influence is still felt in the world today. In culture, as in diplomacy and war, the highest hope of the Byzantines was to keep what they had inherited from their predecessors. They were less creative culturally than their Moslem rivals, yet they built up social and political institutions that were admirably adapted to preserving an inherited civilization in time of stress and danger. Three of these institutions—the autocracy, the army, and the church—were especially characteristic of the Byzantine age.

Though the Byzantine emperors claimed to be lawful successors to Augustus, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius, their resemblance to these predecessors is not easily discerned. They even differed from such intermediate emperors as Diocletian and Constantine. They called themselves "autocrats," or rulers dependent upon and accountable to no one but themselves, and they insisted that all earthly power

Preservation, not creation

Byzantine autocracy

derived ultimately from them—though they might piously add that this power descended through them from God. In practice, however, their autoeracy was checked by many political and financial forces. In theory, the emperor was elected by the higher officials of the state (who formed the senate), with subsequent ratification by the army and the people, but practice was quite different. From time to time an ambitious man would seize control by rebellion. The successful rebel would then keep power in his family by having his son elected and consecrated during his own lifetime, and in like manner the son would assure succession to his descendants. As the emperors thus chosen could be removed from office only by assassination, the new dynasty remained in power until another successful rebel appeared.

**Court
ceremonial**

The emperor lived in a splendid palace where all the details of his public and private life were conducted with great pomp and circumstance. The court ceremonial, derived from that of the Persian kings, was designed primarily to dazzle visitors with the august majesty of the emperor, and the barbarian ambassador who remained unimpressed by all this formality was indeed a remarkable man. With the passage of time, however, obsequiousness elaborated court ritual to absurd extremes, and today many persons somewhat erroneously regard bowing and scraping before the mighty as the most characteristic feature of Byzantine civilization.

**The
bureaucracy**

Many emperors were capable men who led armies themselves and took personal charge of the administration. On the other hand, those who owed their exalted position to their lucky birth sometimes showed little interest in ruling and left the chores of government to their subordinates. In either case, the detailed work was done by an enormous bureaucracy, inherited from late Roman times. Members of this bureaucracy were arranged in an elaborate hierarchy, each level of which enjoyed its own titles, honors, and privileges. They conducted the government with great ruthlessness, employing a large and irresponsible secret police to ferret out the slightest plot or grumbling against the government. Punishments were severe and cruel, often taking the form of maiming or blinding the offender. An especially monstrous case of Byzantine cruelty occurred in 1014 when fifteen thousand Bulgarian prisoners of war were blinded while 150 others were left with only one eye apiece to lead their comrades home. In spite of its many defects, however, the Byzantine autoeracy continued to lumber along for many centuries, and it preserved much of antiquity's heritage for later and happier times.

Conditions being what they then were, the armed forces were of supreme importance to Byzantium, and in retrospect the achievements of the Byzantine army seem quite remarkable. The science of warfare had developed greatly since Roman times, much of its progress being due to Byzantine generals. The Roman army had been largely infantry, but the Byzantines learned from the Persians how to use cavalry. Thereafter they relied especially upon *cataphracts*—heavy cavalry, with horse and rider protected by coats of mail (small interlocked rings of metal) and armed with long lances like medieval knights in armor. For scouting and quick raids, they used light cavalry, armed with javelins (throwing spears) or bows and arrows, but they put less emphasis upon the traditional infantry. Military engineers made equal progress in the science of fortification and bridge building, and they invented the famous “Greek fire”—apparently a petroleum product used to spread fire on enemy boats or bridges.

**The
Byzantine
art of war**

Justinian's successors recruited their armies by conscription. The Empire was divided into districts called “themes,” each of which was required to raise and maintain one army corps. It has been estimated that in the ninth century the Byzantine army included about 120,000 men, or almost half the number maintained by the whole Roman Empire in the second century. The importance of military affairs at this time is also indicated by the fact that military commanders gradually superseded the civilian governors in the themes, and military government was thus extended to the whole Empire. There was also a Byzantine navy, but the imperial authorities rarely gave it adequate support. It sometimes drove back Moslem pirates, but on occasion its inadequacy caused the army to suffer serious reverses.

**The
Byzantine
army**

Byzantine Christianity

Throughout Byzantine times the church served as a prop and embellishment to the throne and the throne repaid these services by supporting the church. The state clearly was the major partner in this marriage, and though the clergy mildly criticized the government at times, they never ceased reminding their flocks that unquestioning obedience to the civil authorities was a major Christian virtue. But while each partner may have derived some benefits from this union of church and state, each also suffered from it. Theological controversies often distracted the state; politicians blatantly invoked

**Union of
church and
state**



CHURCH OF ST. THEODORE, ATHENS. Many small churches of this type were built in Byzantine times. St. Theodore dates from the tenth or eleventh century.

religion to justify their policies or their crimes; and political domination robbed the church of much of its vitality.

**Patriarch
of Constantinople**

The head of the church organization was the patriarch of Constantinople, who, like the heads of other departments of state, was appointed by the emperor. So thoroughly was the Byzantine Church habituated to state control that, after the Turkish conquest (1453), it allowed the sultan to appoint its patriarchs, even though he was a Moslem and, as caliph, the successor of Mohammed and titular head of Islam!³ Moreover, when Eastern Christianity spread to peoples (notably the Slavs) not ruled from Constantinople, separate churches were set up for them in which local sovereigns enjoyed pre-

³ In practice the situation was not quite so anomalous as it might seem. What usually happened was that, when a patriarch died, the leading churchmen would assemble, select the one of their number whom they preferred as his successor, and then bribe the Turkish authorities to appoint that man. Since the fall of the Turkish Empire during World War I, the patriarch has been chosen freely by the church leaders.

rogatives similar to those of the Byzantine emperors. In modern times, therefore, Russia and the various Balkan states have each had their own independent church organizations, each dominated by the local government, and the leadership of the patriarch of Constantinople in the Eastern Church has depended largely upon his personal prestige.

Constantine, Justinian, and their successors were firmly convinced that, if the church was to be of any use to them, it must be firmly united theologically as well as administratively. They therefore laid great emphasis upon theological orthodoxy, and even today the Eastern Church calls itself the "Orthodox Church." Nevertheless, the speculative spirit of the Greeks made it difficult to preserve theological uniformity, and the church was rent by one heresy after another. Following the examples of Constantine and Justinian, the Byzantine emperors vainly attempted to enforce the acceptance of orthodox doctrine. Moreover, heresies often became symbols of dissatisfaction with existing political or social conditions, and only rarely did the rank and file in the rival hosts of orthodoxy and heresy have a clear comprehension of the fantastic theological subtleties which they disputed so fanatically. They merely favored or opposed the Byzantine system as a whole.

**Theological
orthodoxy**

It would be tedious to trace the complicated history of theological controversy in the Eastern Church, yet a few of the major heresies require our attention. One important early heresy, the Arianism of the fourth century, concerned the doctrine of the Trinity (see page 285). Though orthodoxy taught the equality of the three "Persons" in the Trinity, Arius preferred to subordinate the Son (and the Holy Ghost) to the Father. Arius explicitly accepted the divinity of Christ, however, and his views should not be confused with those of modern Unitarians and others who regard Jesus as simply a great religious leader. In later centuries, theologians quarreled over the so-called dual nature of Christ, with orthodoxy teaching that Jesus was at once perfect God and perfect Man. The Nestorians deviated from this norm by laying too much emphasis on his humanity, the Monophysites overemphasized his divinity, and still others disturbed the balance in other ways.

**Theological
controversy**

An even more bitter controversy arose in the eighth century over the worship or reverence paid to images. The "iconoclasts" went around smashing images (or, as they said, "idols") and they enjoyed imperial favor under the Isaurian dynasty (717-820), but in the end

Iconoclasm

their opponents, the "iconodules" (image-worshippers), won out (843). The iconoclasts were especially strong in Asia Minor and the Eastern provinces, where Islam was making rapid progress, while the iconodules were mostly in Greece. Iconoclasts often charged that God favored the idol-smashing Moslems as a punishment of Christians for their idolatry, to which the rival faction replied that infidel successes were God's punishment of Christians for their sacrilegious destruction of the holy images. When the Greeks finally won, many iconoclasts accepted what they considered the purer worship of Islam, and thereafter the Orthodox Church was almost wholly Greek. The victory over iconoclasm therefore marked a decided setback to the powerful Orientalizing forces in the Byzantine Empire.

**Patriarch
vs. pope**

Throughout the Byzantine period the patriarch of Constantinople and the pope of Rome were rarely on friendly terms. In general the leaders of the Eastern and Western churches managed to agree in matters of doctrine, making orthodoxy the same everywhere, but in matters of power and prestige they remained bitter rivals. The popes were already insisting that they be recognized as holding supreme authority over the entire Christian Church, while the patriarchs demanded complete equality. The final breach came in 1054, since which date the Roman Church has denounced the Eastern Church as schismatic, while the Orthodox Church regards the Roman as heretical.⁴

**Missionary
activity**

The Eastern churches, both orthodox and heretical, were active in missionary work, often with the support of the emperor. In the fourth century an Arian named Ulfilas (d. 381) converted the Goths, through whom Arian Christianity spread to nearly all the other Germanic tribes. Ulfilas also made a Gothic translation of the Gospels, parts of which are still available. They are our oldest example of

⁴ A church is said to be schismatic when it severs political and administrative connection with another though no differences of doctrine separate them; it is heretical if it teaches unorthodox doctrines. The only theological difference separating the Eastern and Western churches is one concerning the so-called "Procession of the Holy Ghost" or the "*Filioque*." The Roman Church accepts a version of the creed which says of the Holy Ghost that he "proceedeth from the Father and the Son." The Greeks depounce the words "and the Son" (in Latin, *Filioque*) as an unauthorized insertion by Rome. Countless differences in practice characterize the two churches (Eastern churches conduct their services in national languages, for example, and allow priests to marry) but none is regarded as fundamental. The essential difference between the two churches concerns the supremacy of the pope. Certain groups of Eastern Christians, known as Uniates, have accepted papal supremacy and are therefore recognized by the pope, though they retain their distinctive liturgy, their married clergy, etc.

literature in a Germanic tongue. The importance of Nestorian physicians and translators in the intellectual history of the Moslem world has already been indicated. Other Nestorians carried their variety of Christianity to India and even to China in the seventh and eighth centuries, while Monophysites from Egypt converted Abyssinia and even entered Arabia.

In the ninth century two Orthodox missionaries, Cyril and Methodius, converted various Slavic tribes living in Bohemia and Moravia. The new alphabet they invented, based on the Greek, is still used to write Russian, Serbian, and Bulgarian. The most important victory of Orthodox missions came more than a hundred years later, about 990, when Prince Vladimir, the ruler of Kiev in southeastern Russia, accepted the Byzantine form of Christianity and ordered his people baptized. The Russian Orthodox Church, thus founded, eventually became the largest and most powerful branch of the Eastern Church.

While Byzantine missionaries were entering Russia from the southwest, Moslems were forcing their way through the Caucasus at the southeast. The native tribes living north of the Black Sea, caught between two fires, therefore found it difficult to maintain a pagan neutrality. The ruler of one such tribe, the Khazars, having no desire to offend either of his powerful neighbors by accepting the religion of the other, about 750 ordered his people to embrace Judaism, of which he had learned from Jewish merchants from Constantinople. This is the only large-scale conversion to Judaism known to history.

**Conversion
of the
Slavs**

**Judaism
embraced
by Khazars**

Economic Life

Agriculture was the foundation of Byzantine economic life. In pre-Moslem days Egypt had provided much of the grain consumed by the capital while more luxurious foods came from Syria. In later times Asia Minor had the difficult task of feeding Constantinople as well as herself, which led her to develop a highly intensive agriculture, much superior to anything then known to western Europe. The land was divided into large estates, held either by wealthy aristocrats or by monasteries, and was cultivated by multitudes of serfs. Occasionally the government tried to break up these estates, especially in the days of the iconoclast emperors, but its efforts were in vain. The serfs continued to lead rather wretched lives while the landlords lived in luxury at Constantinople. Here they spent their huge incomes and thus added conspicuously to the wealth and splendor of the city.

Agriculture

Cities

Constantinople was a large and beautiful city, the finest in Europe and a rival to the Baghdad of Harun al-Rashid. It was a city worthy to be the capital of a great empire. Situated at the crossing between Europe and Asia, famed for its churches and palaces, it was visited regularly by traders and travelers from distant countries, and it proudly claimed to be the center of the world. Several cities in Asia Minor, and two or three in the European provinces of the Empire, were larger and richer than any city in Europe before the twelfth century. The population of these lesser cities had declined somewhat from its maximum in the heyday of the Roman Empire, but we have no reliable materials upon which to base an estimate of actual numbers.

Industry

These cities were filled with craftsmen who continued the high traditions of ancient times. All craftsmen were organized in guilds, under rigid state supervision, and every aspect of their work was carefully regulated. These regulations may have helped maintain high standards of workmanship, but in the long run they undoubtedly exercised a deadening influence upon industry. Most craftsmen spent their time making articles of everyday use, of course, but their fame rests primarily upon the luxury goods which they produced for the court and the churches. An item of especial importance was silk. Nestorian monks had smuggled silkworms out of China in the seventh century, and a silk industry had arisen in Syria. After the Moslem conquest, silkworms were cultivated in southern Greece, where Corinth and Thebes developed the industry, but silk was in such demand for court and church ceremonies that its export to foreign countries was strictly forbidden.

Commerce

Commerce was more important than industry at Constantinople. After the Moslem invasions many merchants of such cities as Antioch and Alexandria migrated to the capital, thereby augmenting its commercial class, but retained connections with their old homes. Learning that they and their Moslem colleagues could rise above religious bigotry and do mutually profitable business, these merchants presently made Constantinople a great commercial center. As they usually preferred to let foreign merchants come to them, rather than go abroad seeking goods and markets for themselves, their city was filled with traders from India, Ceylon, and China, from Syria, Egypt, and Spain, from the Balkans and central Europe, from Italy, France, and Britain, and even from Russia and Scandinavia. Again the government undertook to regulate everything. Only a limited number of traders

from a given region were allowed in the city at one time; they were housed while there in government-owned buildings; they might purchase only designated goods and must pay fixed prices; and they were charged heavy import and export duties. Nevertheless, the government performed one service of incalculable value. For seven hundred years after Constantine it resisted all temptations to debase the coinage. Money had by this time virtually disappeared in the West, and Asiatic money was sometimes of questionable value, but Byzantine gold "bezants" were accepted as a medium of exchange the world over.

Intellectual Life

The Byzantines became rich, they built a city that dazzled barbarian visitors, and they preserved much of ancient civilization, but they added little that was new to the intellectual treasures of mankind. They created a new style of architecture, but it had achieved its finest expression before the death of Justinian (565). Mosaics at Constantinople and Ravenna still excite the admiration of critics, while Byzantine icons and other church decorations sometimes attract the curious. Byzantine achievements in the arts went little beyond these limits, however, and aside from one epic dealing with the achievements of a hero fighting against Moslems, Byzantium's contributions to literature were slight.

The Byzantines took no part in, and indeed knew little about, the scientific advances being made in the Moslem world of their day. They produced no important scientists. We hear of a certain "Leo the Mathematician," whose fame was so great that the Caliph al-Mamun vainly offered him a large reward if he would reside in Baghdad. Unfortunately, however, Leo was an iconoclast. His mathematics therefore fell under suspicion, and his works were destroyed by the rival faction when it came into power. Today we know him only by reputation.

Men wrote numerous histories of the world at this time, and other scholars compiled dictionaries and encyclopedias which have preserved information about classic Greek times. Still others assembled books of excerpts for the use of people who lacked the curiosity or the energy required to read the ancient classics in their entirety. Most useful of all, however, were the scribes and librarians who laboriously copied and preserved the great works of ancient Greek literature.

**Byzantine
art**

**Leo the
Mathe-
matician**

Scholarship



BYZANTINE MOSAIC FROM RAVENNA. This mosaic, from the church of San Vitale, in Ravenna, Italy, pictures Theodora, the wife of Justinian, and ladies of her court. (Bettmann Archive)

Modern editions of the Greek classics are nearly always based on manuscripts copied from those made by Byzantine scribes.

**Theologians
and hymn
writers**

Conditions in the Byzantine world being what they were, it is not surprising that the most important and the most revered writers of the day were the theologians. First place among these writers must be accorded to St. John of Damascus, who died about 752. Born to a rich family in Damascus, he served the Omniad caliph as treasurer for many years before he became a monk at Jerusalem. In spite of his friendly association with Moslems, or perhaps because of them, John wrote copiously and bitterly against the iconoclasts. Lives of saints were a popular form of religious literature, filling the universal

human need for romance, vicarious adventure, and inspiration. Other writers were famous for their hymns, a few of which have found their way into modern hymnals. Thus St. Andrew of Crete (eighth century) composed the well-known hymn beginning "Art thou weary? Art thou languid?"—a hymn which well exemplifies the spirit and appeal of popular Byzantine Christianity, especially when it is compared with such martial western hymns as "Onward, Christian soldiers" or "The Son of God goes forth to war."

The more one studies Byzantine history, the more one comes to think of the Byzantines as old, old men, weary but still struggling valiantly to preserve the ideals of an age that had passed. In their day the East had gone over to the Moslems, who became the intellectual and cultural leaders of the world, and western Europe had fallen to peoples whom Byzantium considered illiterate barbarians. Only Constantinople was illuminated by the light of that Greek and Christian learning which was the legacy of the ancient world. The Byzantines preserved something from the wreckage of this ancient civilization and later passed on the fragments to western Europe. It is largely thanks to these Byzantines, therefore, that Greek culture did not perish from the earth.

*An empire
looking
backward*

THE SLAVS

A chapter on Byzantium cannot be satisfactorily concluded without a reference to the Slavs, explaining who they were, whence they came, and how they entered the orbit of Byzantine civilization. The various peoples whom we call Slavs now occupy the greater part of eastern Europe, where they constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, but they are a linguistic rather than a racial group. The original Slavs were a rather small body of people who conquered and imposed their languages upon neighbors of various racial origins. The Slavonic languages belong to the eastern half of the Indo-European family (see page 30), having affinities with Sanskrit and Persian rather than with the Greek, Latin, and Germanic tongues. Presumably, therefore, the original Slavs came out of Asia at an early date.

*Slavic
origins*

Our earliest records of the Slavs come from the second century after Christ, when they were living in what is now Poland, just north of the Carpathian Mountains. In the fifth and sixth centuries, however, they began migrating from their Polish homeland. Those who

*West
Slavs*

traveled west are now known as the West Slavs. They occupied Germany as far as the Elbe River, but they have long since been subjugated and absorbed by the Germans. Other West Slavic tribes, ancestors of the Czechs, crossed the mountains into Moravia and Bohemia. Still others occupied the rest of Poland. These West Slavs received their Christianity and their higher culture largely from the West, and today they are Roman Catholics who write their languages with the Latin alphabet. The Czechs form a special case, having first been converted to Eastern Christianity by Cyril and Methodius (c. 865) and later converted to Latin Christianity—with recalcitrants being sold to Venetian slave traders.

South Slavs

Beginning late in the sixth century other Slavs migrated into the Balkan Peninsula, where they became the Yugoslavs or South Slavs. (The prefix *Yugo* is the Slavic word for "south.") Some came only as raiders, attacking Constantinople and forcing their way into southern Greece, but others established permanent settlements throughout the peninsula. Sometimes the emperors bought off Slavic chieftains by giving them extensive territories for colonization, but other Slavs entered the Byzantine world in a less glorious manner. It has been plausibly suggested that our word "slave" (and the corresponding word in most western European languages) is derived from "Slav" and received its present ignominious meaning because of the large number of Slavs sold in the slave market at Constantinople. Most of the South Slavs received their Christianity from Constantinople and are today members of the Eastern Church, writing their dialects with Cyrillic characters, but a few tribes in the northwest, notably the Croats and the Slovenes, were later forced to accept Roman Catholicism and the Latin alphabet.

Bulgars

The original Bulgars were not Slavs at all but nomads from Asia who settled near the Caspian Sea and along the Volga River—whence their name. Late in the seventh century (c. 680) they entered the Balkan Peninsula, where they presently established a powerful empire. They attained their greatest power early in the tenth century but were overthrown some fifty years later (c. 970). Meantime they had adopted the language of the Slavs and Byzantine Christianity (869), after which they were gradually absorbed by the Slavic population of the Balkans. Today they are virtually indistinguishable in language and culture from the other South Slav peoples.

Magyars

About 900, various tribes of Asiatic nomads, collectively called Magyars, began entering the Hungarian plain along the middle



Danube. Here they established a great empire, and here they still predominate. They thus drove a non-Slavic wedge between the West Slavs of Bohemia and the South Slavs of the Balkans, and as they received their Christianity from Rome, they eventually became an outpost of Western culture.

**East
Slavs**

The most important of all the Slavic peoples were the East Slavs. Moving eastward from their early homeland in Poland, they settled in southern and central Russia, especially along the Dnieper River, and Kiev became their principal city. As the main highway from the Baltic to the Black Sea followed the Dnieper Valley, this region was often visited by traders and raiders from Scandinavia, whom the Slavs called Varangians or Russ. Gradually the newcomers acquired political power. Tradition asserts that a certain Rurik began to rule at Novgorod near the Baltic soon after 860 and that his successor Oleg established his capital at Kiev about twenty years later. The dynasty of Rurik then ruled for more than three centuries over a loosely federated Slavic state that extended from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the Carpathians eastward into the steppes beyond Moscow. This state was called Russia, from its Varangian rulers. The adoption of Christianity (c. 990) brought Byzantine culture to Russia, and in the eleventh century Kiev became a famous city. Perhaps it was more civilized than any then existing in western Christendom.

**Russia's
Byzantine
heritage**

For several centuries Constantinople exercised a sort of tutelage over the early Russian state, principally through the Russian Orthodox Church. In those early days its chief official (the metropolitan) and its higher clergy were nearly always Greeks. When Constantinople was taken by the Turks (1453), the Russians proudly proclaimed that Moscow (by that time their capital) was the "third Rome"—third, that is, after the Rome on the Tiber and the one on the Bosphorus. After marrying the niece of the last Byzantine emperor, the Russian tsar made every effort to continue the old regime. Russia thus became the principal inheritor of Byzantine practice in autocracy and religion.

THE DECLINE OF THE NEAR EAST

**Nomads
from Asia**

Throughout their long history the Byzantine emperors and the caliphs were constantly harassed by nomads from central Asia, and each line of rulers, when its fatal hour struck, was destroyed by Asiatic invaders. Huns and Avars, Bulgars and Magyars, overran eastern and central Europe repeatedly between the fifth and tenth

centuries, while other Asiatics were attacking Persia or the empire of the caliphs. The most formidable of the Asiatic invaders, however, were the Turks. Originating in Turkestan, these nomadic warriors had accepted Islam in the ninth century, and during the next two hundred years they kept the whole Near East in confusion.

Turks had first entered the Near East as a bodyguard of slaves to protect the caliph at Baghdad. They presently made him their prisoner, and for over a hundred years they governed the Abbassid empire through these helpless caliphs (836-945). A Persian general then expelled them from Baghdad, assumed a title about equivalent to "generalissimo," and with his successors governed the empire for another hundred years (945-1055). The Persians governed well, and the century of their rule was prosperous, economically and intellectually. The Persian rulers were presently overthrown, however, and thereafter Turks of one group or another dominated the Near East until the nineteenth century.

**Coming of
the Turks**

The new Turkish invasion was led by a certain Tughril Beg, founder of the Seljuk dynasty. After occupying northern Persia, Tughril captured Baghdad (1055), "freed" the grateful caliph, and by him was granted the title of Sultan—"one having dominion." A few years later one of Tughril's kinsmen invaded Armenia, where he defeated and captured the Byzantine emperor at Manzikert (1071). Various members of the Seljuk dynasty then overran Asia Minor, where they set up states of their own. One of them even ruled for a few years at Nicaea, barely fifty miles from Constantinople. His descendants assumed the grandiloquent title Sultan of Rum ("Rome"), and ruled from Iconium. The spectacular conquests of the Seljuks ceased with the first generation, and they soon fell to quarreling among themselves, but they dominated the Near East for over two hundred years.

**Seljuk
conquests**

One consequence of the Seljuk conquests was the European invasion of the Near East which we know as the First Crusade. As the European aspects of the crusading movement will be discussed in a later chapter (see page 450), we shall now mention only its fleeting disturbance of the Near East and its more unfortunate effects upon the Byzantine Empire. Though professing that their sole purpose was to rescue the Sepulcher of Christ from the infidels (who had held it for over four centuries), various crusaders presently developed other ambitions. The armies of the First Crusade reached Constantinople late in 1096, reconquered parts of Asia Minor (including Nicaea),

**The
Crusades**

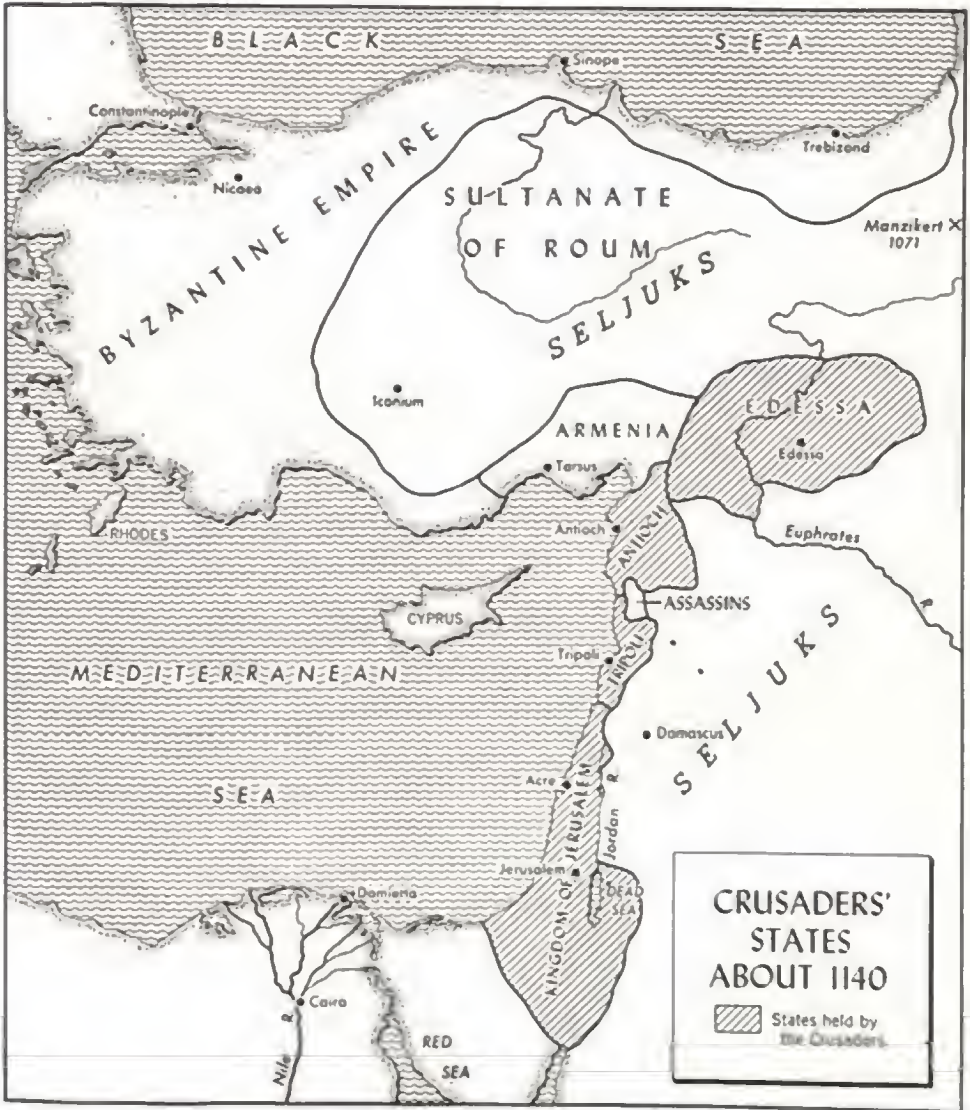


CITADEL OF ALEPPO. The Crusaders tried in vain to capture this Moslem stronghold in the twelfth century.

and advanced toward Palestine. Forgetting Jerusalem for the moment, one Christian leader then went off to found an independent principality for himself at Edessa, while others did the same at Antioch and Tripoli. At last, however, the main body of crusaders entered the Holy City (1099) and founded the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Saladin

The Christians owed their success in part to the Seljuks, who were so busy quarreling with one another that they had no energy left for resisting the invaders. Presently, however, the Moslems were ready to counterattack. The reconquest of Edessa (1144) led to the Second Crusade (1147-1149), which was a fiasco from the beginning. During the next forty years the Moslems augmented their military forces and discovered a commander of genius, the famous Saladin (Salah al-Din, 1138-1193). After becoming Sultan of Egypt by overthrowing the Fatimid dynasty (1174), and conquering Syria and Iraq, Saladin undertook to drive the Christians from Palestine. His recapture of Jerusalem (1187) brought on the Third Crusade (1189-1192). Saladin could not complete the liberation of Palestine, but neither could the crusaders regain Jerusalem. During the next century ambitious Christian leaders launched other futile crusades, but the fall of Acre (1291) put an end to the last of the crusaders' kingdoms.



The Fourth Crusade differed fundamentally from the others and exercised a far deeper influence upon the history of the Near East. Intriguers managed to shift the attack from Palestine to Constantinople, which they carried by storm in April, 1204. The crusaders then diverted themselves for several days looting the richest city in Christendom. The leaders had already agreed upon a division of the spoils, and at once they proclaimed a Latin Empire under Baldwin of

**The Fourth
Crusade
(1202–
1204)**

Flanders. Subordinate principalities were created for lesser crusaders, and several Aegean Islands went to Venice, whose diplomats had played a sinister role throughout. After the Eastern and Western churches had been nominally reunited under the pope, a Venetian was appointed patriarch of Constantinople. A revived Bulgarian Empire then took advantage of the general confusion to seize the greater part of the Balkan Peninsula.

**Byzantine
Empire
revived**

After the fall of Constantinople in 1204, various Greek leaders fled to Asia Minor, where they set up a new capital at Nicaea. As the Latins had seized both sides of the Straits, and as the Seljuk Sultan of Rum had occupied at least two-thirds of Asia Minor, these Greeks held only the northwestern corner of the peninsula—plus small territories around Trebizond and in Epirus. Half a century later, however, the emperor at Nicaea (Michael VIII Palaeologus) regained parts of Greece, and in 1261 he captured Constantinople itself. He made no progress against the Bulgars, but in the next century their empire was destroyed (1330) by a Serbian leader who founded a short-lived Serbian Empire. As soon as the Latin patriarch had been expelled from Constantinople, the Eastern and Western churches again broke asunder, and only a legacy of bitter hatred survived their momentary union. The restoration of its old capital gave the Byzantine Empire a new lease on life, and for almost two centuries the Palaeologi continued to rule Constantinople and a tiny fragment of its once mighty empire.

**Mongol
invasions**

Meantime another blow had fallen upon the Near East from central Asia, where a leader known as Genghis Khan (1167–1227) had welded the Mongols into a formidable fighting force. Attacking Persia in 1219, he overran the country with frightful slaughter. Great cities, such as Merv and Nishapur, seat of a famous university, were utterly destroyed. Genghis's sons and grandsons continued his bloody work, completing the conquest of China (see page 398), further devastating the Near East, temporarily occupying much of Seljuk Asia Minor (1243), and sacking Baghdad (1258), Aleppo, and Antioch (1260). They were defeated by an Egyptian army in 1281, and driven from Syria, but a Mongol dynasty ruled Persia until 1349. Other Mongol armies, advancing westward, had invaded Russia in 1241, reached Liegnitz in Silesia (now in eastern Germany) and Olmütz in Bohemia, crossed Hungary, and even touched the Adriatic. They could not hold so vast a desolation, but they founded an autocracy, known

as the Golden Horde, which dominated most of European Russia for two hundred years.

A century later the Near East suffered a second Mongol invasion, led by Tamerlane, or Timur the Lame (1335-1405). Born in Turkestan, Tamerlane early won control of the territory north of the Oxus River and east of the Caspian Sea, where he made Samarkand his capital. He overran Persia in 1380-1381, defeated the armies of the Golden Horde in 1391, and invaded India in 1398, advancing as far as Delhi. Baghdad was again destroyed in 1401, and a year later the Turks were defeated in Asia Minor, after which the Mongols penetrated as far as Nicaea. A little later Aleppo and Damascus were destroyed with dreadful slaughter, and an Egyptian army was defeated in its turn, but Tamerlane's heart was set on conquering China and he turned toward the Celestial Empire. While on his way thither he died (1405). Tamerlane was credited with being more cruel and bloodthirsty than the earlier Mongols, and he left behind him less of an empire than they, but he greatly advanced their work by destroying the better part of Moslem civilization in Asia.

Tamerlane

Last of all came the Ottoman Turks. Ever since the appearance of the Seljuks in the eleventh century, nomadic peoples had been filtering into the Near East from Turkestan, and the activities of Genghis Khan and his successors accelerated this infiltration. The Seljuk rulers in Asia Minor, who had been greatly weakened by the first Mongol attack (1243), frequently employed these newcomers as frontier guards. One group of such guards, led by the descendants of a man named Othman and therefore called Ottoman Turks, was stationed in northwestern Asia Minor in the vicinity of Nicaea. Before 1350 it rendered itself independent of its decadent Seljuk employers. The Ottomans then crossed the Dardanelles and began their European conquests by taking Adrianople (1361). Bulgaria was added to their domain a few years later, and Serbia became a vassal state after her defeat at Kosovo (1389). The Ottoman Turks also expanded their rule in Asia Minor, most of which peninsula was in their hands before 1400.

**Ottoman
Turks**

Tamerlane's invasion (1402) threw the Ottoman forces into confusion for a moment, but they soon resumed their conquests. Their attempts to seize the islands of the Aegean precipitated the first of a long series of wars with Venice (1416), and in 1422 they boldly but vainly laid siege to Constantinople itself. During the next thirty years

**Fall of
Constantinople
(1453)**



MOHAMMED II. This portrait of the Turkish conqueror of Constantinople (1453) was painted from life by the Italian artist, Bellini. (Culver)

they busied themselves with further gains in the Balkans, consolidating their earlier conquests, and then they were ready for a more serious attack upon the Imperial City. Mohammed II (1451-1481) launched the attack early in 1453 and his forces entered the city on May 29. The last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI Palaeologus, died fighting bravely on the walls.

The Ottomans at once made Constantinople their capital, but their conquests did not cease. Within a few years they had occupied the entire Balkan Peninsula, including Greece and most of the islands, and had snatched Crimea and much of southern Russia from the Golden Horde (1475). Syria, Egypt, and Arabia were presently added



(1516–1517), Hungary was conquered (1526), Vienna was besieged (1529), Mesopotamia and Baghdad were taken from the Persians (1534), and all North Africa, including Morocco, was added by 1556. These last conquests were made in the days of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520–1566), the most famous of the Turkish sultans, under whom the Ottoman Empire attained its greatest extent and its greatest renown. For more than a century thereafter the Ottoman Turks remained a power feared by Europe, but their conquests were completed.

The last Abbassid caliph had been murdered during the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258. The ruler of Egypt then conferred the title upon a distant relative of the last caliph and kept him as a powerless creature at Cairo, not recognized by most Moslem authorities on holy law. The lawyers then began saying that the line of true caliphs—temporal and spiritual successors of the Prophet—had ceased with Ali (661), or with Harun al-Rashid (809), or at the very latest with al-Mamun (833), but they admitted that any temporal ruler who enforced Islamic law might be called a caliph after a fashion. There was no reason why there might not be two or more such caliphs

***Decline
of the
caliphate***

simultaneously in different parts of the world. The Ottoman sultans assumed a caliphate of this secondary sort after their conquest of Egypt and were satisfied with it until the end of the eighteenth century, when, as we shall see in due time, they began developing new theories regarding the position and powers of the caliph.

VIII

Buddha (Archeological Survey of India)



THE CIVILIZATIONS OF ASIA

FAR EASTERN CULTURES—INDIA—
CHINA AND THE FAR EAST

B.C.	Western Europe	B.C.	Eastern Europe	B.C.	Neor East
2500	Neolithic in Central Europe			3000–2000	Sumeria and Egypt
1900–1600	Italy invaded from the north	2000–1600	Achaeans invade Greece	1900	Hittites in Asia Minor
		1600–1400	Minoan Civilization	1600–1200	Egyptian Empire
600–500	Etruscans at Rome			d. 583	Zoroaster
				c. 600	Jeremiah
				c. 550	Cyrus
		490–480	Persian Wars		
		334–323	Alexander		
218–02	Hannibal in Italy				
	Roman Empire				
A.D.		A.D.		A.D.	
d. 14	Augustus			d. 30	Jesus
d. 337	Constantine				
447–453			Huns		
476	End of Roman Empire in the West				
400–800	Barbarian kings Conversion to Christianity	d. 565	Justinian	d. 579	Chosroes I
711	Moslems in Spain			622	Hegira
				661–750	Ommiads
800	Charlemagne	850–1000	Conversion of Slavs to Christianity	750–1258	Abbasids
		867–1057	Macedonian dynasty: Golden Age	d. 809	Harun al-Rashid: Golden Age
		1054	Schism of Eastern and Western Churches		
1096–1291	Crusades	1204	Crusaders sack Constantinople		
		1241	Golden Horde		
1492	Last Moors expelled from Spain	1453	Fall of Constantinople	d. 1405	Tamerlane
		d. 1566	Suleiman the Magnificent		

B.C.	India	B.C.	China	B.C.	Japan
2500–2200	Indus Civilization	2500	Neolithic on the Hwang Ho		
					Ainus
1500–1200	Aryan Invasions	1400	Shang culture		
		1000–221	Chou dynasty		
		479	Five Classics Confucius		
d. 483	Gautomo, the Buddha				
<hr/>					
d. 232	Asoko	221–206	Ch'in dynasty		
		206	Han dynasty		
		100	Silk route opened		
<hr/>					
A.D.		A.D.		A.D.	
				100	Mongoloid Invasions
		220	End of Han dynasty Buddhism flourishes		
320	Gupto Empire be- gins Golden Age			c. 300	Yamato rulers
<hr/>					
		Huns			
649	Harsha	618–908	T'ang dynasty		Chinese influence Buddhism
712	Maslems in Sind				
1000	Maslem conquests	960–1279	Sung dynasty Golden Age	858–1156	Fujiwara period Golden Age
				1185–1867	Shoguns
<hr/>					
		d. 1227	Genghis Khan		
		d. 1294	Kublai Khan (Marco Polo)		
d. 1530	Baber	1368–1644	Ming dynasty		
d. 1605	Akbar				
<hr/>					

21. FAR EASTERN CULTURES

Up to this point we have been examining the civilization and history of only one small portion of mankind—the portion which then inhabited the ancient Orient and the Mediterranean basin. We have seen how men in the Near East created a neolithic culture some seven thousand years ago, and we have traced its gradual progress and extension over the larger area. Differing geographical conditions, differing cultural inheritances from paleolithic times, and historic circumstances caused this neolithic culture to develop along different lines in different regions, however, and thus gave rise to various new cultures, Oriental, Greek, and Roman. The Roman Empire embraced all three culture groups, which enabled each to be enriched by contributions from the others, but after its decline, each group developed along its own lines. The culture of the ancient Orient received new forms in the Moslem world; that of ancient Greece survived in the Byzantine Empire, whence a part of it passed to the Russians and other Slavs, who gave it a new character; and we shall presently see in greater detail how the peoples of western Europe built upon foundations laid by the Romans. History thus shows us how ancient are the origins of our civilization and how long and arduous has been the task of creating it.

There are still other culture groups in the world today, however, and some of them have created elaborate and highly complicated civilizations of their own. The story of the rise of modern European and American civilization therefore is not the only thread in the tangled skein of human history, nor is it the only important one. Other civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world, differing profoundly from those we have been studying. Their foundations were laid in their own distinctive neolithic cultures, which were quite inde-

*Neolithic
base of
modern
culture*

*Other
cultures
than ours*

pendent of those arising in the Near East, and at times these Asiatic civilizations have equaled the best that their European competitors could then show. Europe has never had a monopoly on higher civilization.

**Why study
Asiatic
civiliza-
tions?**

But why should Americans of European descent and culture concern themselves with something that has contributed as little to their civilization as has early and medieval Asia? In the first place, the civilizations of India and China differ so widely from ours that they possess all the romantic interest of strange peoples and places. Moreover, a careful study of these foreign civilizations gives us something to compare with our own; it impresses upon us the fact that civilization can take many forms, no one of which is the best, always and for all men; and it may thus help us deflate our Western arrogance. We shall see that for some six hundred years, while western Europe was sunk in the "Dark Ages" (A.D. 500-1100), the peoples of China and India, like those of the Moslem world, were enjoying a period of such brilliant cultural achievement that they would have been quite justified in dismissing western Europe from their minds as a land of unlettered barbarians.

**Asia in the
twentieth
century**

Though cultural primacy eventually returned to Europe, the signs all indicate a great political and cultural revival in twentieth-century Asia. In recent years the Asiatics have learned much from Europe and America, to be sure, but they have not surrendered their own cultural traditions. In fact, they could not utterly forsake them, even should they so desire. It is absurd to suppose that any considerable number of Asiatics will ever become conventional Europeans, and it is equally absurd to assume that Europe will continue forever to enjoy the cultural leadership that has been hers in recent centuries. The world civilization of the future will doubtless blend European and non-European elements to form intricate new cultural patterns, and the importance of these non-European peoples in the world today is such that alert Americans need to know something of their cultural background. As enough has already been said of the early Islamic world, the present chapter will sketch the cultural history of India and Indochina, of China, and of Japan from early times to the Mongol conquests in the thirteenth century.

22. INDIA

INDIA is a great peninsula or subcontinent that juts southward from Asia into the Indian Ocean and is enclosed on the north by the Himalaya Mountains. Its area of about 1,600,000 square miles is slightly more than half that of continental United States (three million square miles) but greater than that of Europe outside the "Iron Curtain" (1,450,000 square miles). In 1951 its population was 437 million, as opposed to 151 million in the United States and slightly over 300 million in western Europe. India's huge population is a modern development, however, and the country was not densely inhabited in earlier times. Today the peninsula is divided between two self-governing members of the British Commonwealth—the Republic of India, which is largely Hindu in religion, and Pakistan, which is largely Moslem.

*The Indian
peninsula*

The Indian peninsula is divided by nature into four great zones. At the north, the Himalaya Mountains separate India from the rest of Asia much more effectively than the Urals separate Asia from Europe. There are passes at each end of this great range, however, the easiest of them being the Khyber, which connects Afghanistan with the upper valley of the Indus. Over this pass invading conquerors have swarmed into India many times in recorded history, and no doubt they came just as often in prehistoric times. South of the mountains lies a great plain, watered by the Indus River in the west and by the Ganges in the east. Here are to be found most of India's cities and peoples; here most of her civilization developed; and here most of the famous events in her history took place. South of the Vindhya Hills and the Nerbada River is the great central plateau known as the Deccan. And finally come the coastlands—the Malabar Coast on the west and the Coromandel Coast on the east—which are separated from the Deccan by the Ghat Hills.

*Indian
geography*

Climate

The climate of India is dominated by the monsoon winds. These monsoons blow in a northeasterly direction from the Indian Ocean from June through September, bringing a period of heavy rains, and in the opposite direction from October through February, bringing cool air from the Himalayas. The remaining months, March to June, are stiflingly hot except in the far north. This enervating climate has profoundly influenced Indian history, for India has been invaded time and time again by energetic peoples from the north, but in every case they have soon lost their strength and vigor.

Neolithic culture

Archeology shows that India has been inhabited since early paleolithic times and it enables us to sketch the major outlines of her cultural history through the neolithic and bronze ages. Anthropologists and linguists, on the other hand, can tell us something about the many races that have mingled to form the Indian people of today. Small groups of Negritos, now found only in the far south, are the remnants of very early inhabitants, though not necessarily of the first inhabitants of the peninsula: even today they are simple savages. Neolithic culture first entered India from southeastern Asia, apparently brought by a people distantly related to the Australian aborigines. It was characterized by the cultivation of rice, the extensive use of bamboo for buildings and weapons (spears and blowguns), by boomerangs, and eventually by tombs hewn into the solid rock and monuments built of huge cut stones called "megaliths." Thousands of megaliths may still be seen in the Deccan. The three million persons in northeastern India today who speak languages belonging to the Munda family (other dialects of which are found throughout southeastern Asia) presumably are descended from the pioneers who brought neolithic culture from Indochina to India.

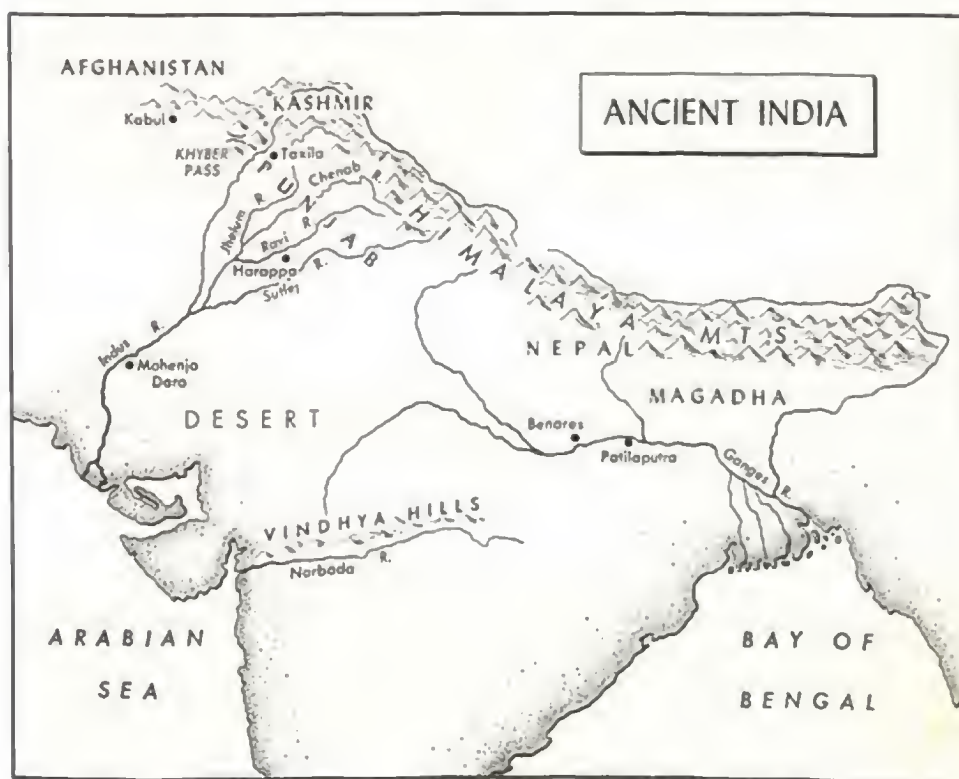
Dravidians

Beside them in southern India dwell about sixty million persons who speak Dravidian languages. These languages show no kinship to any other known family of languages, and scholars therefore cannot decide when or whence the Dravidian-speakers came. At present the prevailing opinion holds that they entered from the northwest after the Mundas had occupied much of India, but there are scholars who maintain that they too came from the east and were therefore the first to bring neolithic culture to India. In any case, Dravidians and Mundas amalgamated to a great extent, with the Dravidians usually becoming the dominant partners, and for many centuries after 4000 B.C. they controlled India. The culture and religion of modern India rest to a large extent upon foundations laid by these Dravidian-speak-

ing peoples. India has since been invaded many times by men of other races—Mediterraneans, Mongols, Alpines, Nordies—but only the Nordies have added substantially to Dravidian culture in the greater part of the peninsula. Strange to say, however, Nordic racial characteristics are now rarely found in India except among the hillsmen in the north.

Somewhat later a second neolithic culture, based primarily on the cultivation of barley and wheat, and with pottery closely resembling that of neolithic Mesopotamia, appeared in the Indus Valley. It seems to have been brought by a Mediterranean people from the Near East, who presently created the first urban civilization in India. Pottery fragments have been found which date from about 3200 B.C. (as we learn by comparing them with similar Sumerian pottery), but the Indus Valley civilization did not reach its flowering until almost a thousand years later in the two great cities, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa.

*The Indus
Valley
culture*



*Mohenjo-
Daro*

The ruins at Mohenjo-Daro, unearthed during the 1920's, cover an area of almost a square mile, and at Harappa, four hundred miles to the north, they are even larger. The streets, laid out at right angles to the points of the compass, were paved and drained with well-built sewers, and aqueducts provided an adequate water supply. Houses built of kiln-dried brick often consisted of only two small rooms, but others were large and sumptuous. These cities were commercial centers, inhabited by thousands of persons, and possessing a Bronze Age culture and a political and economic organization strong enough to collect food from countless villages over a wide area. There are not many traces of war, or of a military caste, which would imply a peaceful population of peasants, but there is ample evidence that traders from Mohenjo-Daro reached the great cities of Sumeria. Their hieroglyphics have not yet been deciphered, though scholars sometimes note resemblances with early Sumerian writing. No temples have been discovered, but there are statuettes of the Earth Mother, so widely worshiped throughout the neolithic Near East. Others represent a deity probably to be identified with Siva, who still holds a prominent place in the Hindu religion. Traces of this civilization have been found at many sites in the Indus Valley, but it does not seem to have passed to other parts of India. After an existence of some three centuries, 2500-2200 B.C., Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were destroyed and abandoned, and for seven or eight centuries thereafter India could boast only a decadent Bronze Age culture.

*Creators of
this culture*

Skeletons found at Mohenjo-Daro show that racially the population of the city was highly mixed. There were Australoids, Alpines, Mongols, and Mediterraneans, with the latter apparently the dominant class. If the Dravidian-speaking peoples of India created this high civilization, as is sometimes suggested, why did it not spread to the rest of Dravidian India? Anthropologists often find characteristics of the Mediterranean race in the Indus Valley population today, but not in the Deccan and southern India. It would therefore seem that Mediterraneans invaded the Indus Valley in the fourth millennium, bringing this new culture with them, that they subjugated a sparse Dravidian population instead of expelling or exterminating it, and that whatever traces of Dravidian culture are to be found at Mohenjo-Daro—the statuettes of Siva, for example—were the work of this subjugated people.

*The two
Indias*

This view of conditions at Mohenjo-Daro also suggests that the present division between Pakistan and India goes back to ancient

times. The Moslem invaders of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had little trouble converting their Mediterranean kinsmen of the Indus Valley to Islam, for these peoples had long lived under alien domination, but in Dravidian India the Moslems enjoyed only superficial and temporary successes. Like many another intruder upon the sacred soil of Mother India, they were quickly absorbed by the peoples whom they had conquered.

The Vedic Age

In an earlier chapter we saw that, toward the middle of the second millennium before Christ, the land now known as Iran, or Persia, was invaded by nomads speaking an Indo-European language and that their descendants eventually founded the mighty Persian Empire (see page 74). At about the same time a kindred people was forcing its way into India from the northwest, presumably entering through the Khyber Pass. These invaders called themselves Aryans. We have no contemporary record of their coming, and archeology has been of little help to us in studying this invasion, but it seems that these Aryans came in waves during the two or three centuries after 1500 B.C., that they easily subdued the decadent inheritors of the Indus civilization, and that by 1200 they were ruling the Punjab, if not the whole Indus Valley. About four hundred years later they embarked upon a new period of conquest, and by 600 B.C. they had established their supremacy over the whole Ganges Valley except Bengal at the river's mouth. They founded various states as they advanced, the easternmost and most powerful of which was Magadha, just west of modern Bengal. Small groups of Aryans also pushed into southern India, where they eventually exercised great cultural influence though their political power did not extend far south of the Nerbada River.

**Aryan
invaders**

Like their kinsmen in Iran, these Aryan invaders spoke an Indo-European language, the Indian form of which is now known as Sanskrit—a language which astonished European scholars in the eighteenth century by its similarities with Greek and Latin. Sanskrit later became the sacred language of Hinduism, and such it has remained down to the present day, just as Latin became the language of the Roman Catholic Church. Like Latin, however, Sanskrit ceased to be a spoken language long ago, and it has since been known only by scholars. Before 500 B.C. the various peoples of northern India

Sanskrit

were speaking various languages derived from Sanskrit, which were known as Prakrits (vernaculars), and today almost 150 languages are spoken in the Indian peninsula. About three-quarters of the Indian people speak one of the twenty-two dialects descended from Sanskrit, the chief of which is Hindustani or Urdu.

The Vedas

The earliest Sanskrit literature consists of collections of religious texts known as the Vedas, some of which go back to about 1200 B.C. The earliest and most important of the Vedas is the Rigveda, a collection of about a thousand hymns to the "Vedic" gods. Three other Vedas include later hymns, collections of prayers and mystic formulas, and compilations of magic spells and incantations. These Vedas were regarded as inspired scripture, so sacred that no word could be changed, and Hindus still accord them the same high reverence that Christians give the Bible. In the next period of Indian history commentaries were composed to explain the Vedas, and between 600 and 300 B.C. came the Upanishads, which discuss theological and philosophical questions. The period when the Aryans were conquering the Ganges Valley also produced the two enormous epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, which played much the role in India that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* played in ancient Greece.

How the early Aryans lived

The Vedas picture the Aryans in northwest India and the Punjab at a time when they had forgotten their early wanderings and knew but little of the Ganges Valley. They fought their many wars—glorified cattle raids—principally against each other. Living in villages and fortified strongholds, their houses often were mere wickerwork daubed with mud, but the better ones might be built of timber. They were a pastoral people, interested primarily in their cattle, though they practiced agriculture as well. Like most pastoral peoples, they organized their society on a patriarchal basis, with the father of the family exercising great authority. Villages were rather democratically governed by the heads of families, and several villages might be united as a tribe under a *raja* (a word related to the Latin *rex*, "king"), who led the army in time of war and who much resembled a Homeric chieftain. Warriors fought with bronze swords, battle-axes, and javelins, but their principal weapon was the bow and arrow. When not engaged in fighting they spent their time hunting, chariot racing, gambling with dice, and imbibing great quantities of strong liquor. These early Aryans were a highly intelligent people and their poets were gifted men.

Caste

In Vedic times the people of northern India were classified in four

social groups on the basis of their occupations. First came the Brahmins, or priests, specialists in all matters touching religion; they offered the sacrifices, declared the will of the gods, and composed and preserved the Vedas. The Kshatriyas, or warriors, formed a second caste, to whom fell the duties and pleasures of war and government. Below them stood the Vaisyas, or common people, who were herdsmen, farmers, or artisans. The fourth caste consisted of Sudras, or laborers, who did the menial work of the community; most of them apparently were descended from the pre-Aryan populations; and they were rather contemptuously referred to by their social betters as "dark-skinned" and "snub-nosed," or as "slaves." Not being considered members of the Aryan community, the Sudras were not admitted to its religious rites, which led to the further reproach that they were "non-sacrificing." The law forbade the intermarriage of persons of different groups, but at first these rules were not well enforced. The Brahmins were especially anxious to remain uncontaminated by social or racial pollutions, however, and in later times, when the Aryans began finding it difficult to maintain their political and social superiority, they strictly enforced the rules about caste. The original four castes were divided and subdivided, until there were as many as three thousand of them, all strictly hereditary. At the bottom of this social ladder stood the millions of "untouchables."

Indian Religions

India has long been known as the great mother of religions. Even in Roman times philosophers occasionally made long and perilous journeys to the east, hoping to learn wisdom from Indian sages, and in our own day students of comparative religion have found India a fruitful field for study. Some Indian religions are as primitive as any on earth; others must be counted among the most exalted; and it is possible to trace India's religious development through the long course of her history. Moreover, nothing reveals the character of the Indian people better than religion, which is the key to much of their history.

The religion of the Rigveda was that of a primitive pastoral people. One of its deities was the sky god Dyaus-pitar, who was worshiped as Zeus-pater in Greece and as Jupiter in Rome; another was Agni, a god recognized in fire, whose name is preserved in the Latin word *ignis*, "fire"; and still another was Mitra, akin to the Persian Mithra.

*India's
religious
variety*

*Vedic
religion*

The greatest of all the Vedic gods, however, was the storm-god Indra, whose thunderbolts aided the Aryans in their conquests. These gods were brought to India by the Aryans and worshiped by them with prayers and sacrifices. Each family made its private prayers and offerings daily around the hearth, and there were great public sacrifices of cattle, not unlike the hecatombs offered by the Homeric Greeks. Even in these early times, however, other gods, presumably of Dravidian origin, were forcing their way into the Vedic pantheon, just as various pre-Achaean gods, such as Demeter, eventually mounted the Homeric Mount Olympus. Thus Siva, whom we have already met at Mohenjo-Daro, is occasionally mentioned in the Vedas, and he, together with Vishnu (likewise of Dravidian origin), eventually became one of the most widely revered gods in India. In the end the Dravidian gods prevailed, after their great Aryan rivals had fallen by the way.

**Brahman-
ism**

This primitive Vedic religion may have served the pastoral Aryans well, but a time came when it no longer was adequate. Vedic mythology and theology were modified by the addition of new practices and new ideas as set forth in the Upanishads. This revised form of the Vedic religion is called Brahmanism. Rejecting or explaining away much of the cruder mythology of the Vedas, the Brahmins developed a theology which taught that the whole universe is permeated by an impersonal divine spirit (*Brahma*), akin to the soul of man, and they worked out a system of physical and mental discipline (*yoga*) by which men could bring their souls into harmony with this spirit and thereby achieve wisdom or salvation. They insisted upon the vanity of all earthly pleasures, declaring them to be illusions; they gave little attention to rituals and sacrifices, but they urged various ascetic practices as a means of purifying and training the soul; they pictured the sage as a man who withdrew to the forest for meditation; and they developed elaborate views about fate (*karma*) and the transmigration of souls. This theology taught that after a man's death his soul migrates to the body of another man or animal, and that a man's ethical conduct in this life determines his character and status in the next, just as his status in this life was determined by his conduct in earlier incarnations.

**Disillusion-
ment and
world
flight**

As no such ideas are to be found in the Vedas, we naturally wonder about their origin. They hardly seem appropriate to a race of conquering warriors, who would scarcely strive to conquer a world that they believed to be an illusion or despise a world that they had just conquered joyously. The Brahmins, on the other hand, were a con-

servative priestly caste, little likely to introduce new ideas except under pressure from the outside. It seems very probable, therefore, that Brahmanism represents one step in the cultural conquest of the Aryan invaders by the natives whom they had defeated in battle. Perhaps the enervating climate of the Ganges Valley and central India helped make the Aryans less bellicose, and perhaps the pessimism of the new religion was encouraged by a general disillusionment following the wars. The ascetic features inherent in all religions are likely to become more prominent in times of distress and social disintegration. It is quite evident that at this time the Brahmans were much concerned about the future of their caste, for they were then making and enforcing the rigid rules that have preserved that system to our own day. And finally, the same general disillusionment, asceticism, and world flight are shown to an even greater degree by the two new religions that arose in India late in the sixth century before Christ, namely, Jainism and Buddhism.

The religion known as Jainism was founded about 500 B.C. by a certain Vardhamana, commonly known as Mahavira, or "Great Hero" (Latin, *Magnus Vir*). After practicing extreme asceticism for several years, he began preaching and inspired crowds of followers with his ascetic ideals. Though critical of the Brahmans and rejecting the Vedas, Mahavira retained the Brahman beliefs about the evilness of the world, the transmigration of souls, and *karma*. He taught that it was possible to escape from the world and fate by means of the "Three Jewels": Right Faith, Right Knowledge, and Right Living. For him, Right Faith was belief that in the past men have become Jinās ("victors over the world"), and that it still is possible to become one; Right Knowledge was an elaborate teaching about the nature of the world and the soul; and Right Living required obedience to five laws: not to injure any living thing, not to lie, not to steal, not to be unchaste, and not to desire worldly possessions. (Compare these five laws with the last five commandments in the Mosaic Decalogue.) Many of Mahavira's followers became mendicant monks, but others lived according to his rules as best they could while engaged in ordinary occupations. Jainist philosophy found no place for a god, but it revered the saints (Jinās, especially Mahavira himself), to whom temples were erected—these apparently being the first temples in India. When it became evident that not everyone could practice the extreme asceticism of the rigorists, two sects of Jainists arose, the moderates being "white-robed" while the extremists went "sky-clad"—i.e., naked. There are

Jainism

about 1,500,000 Jainists in India today, but the religion has not spread widely outside that country.

**Gautama
Buddha**

The other great religious teacher of sixth-century India, Gautama, the Buddha or "the Enlightened One" (c. 563–483), was born to a princely family of northern Magadha, not far from the present frontier of Nepal. Though married to a beautiful princess and the father of a son, he made "the Great Renunciation" when thirty years of age, leaving home and family to become a wandering ascetic. For five years he lived with other ascetics in the forest, but when he found fasting and penances to be of no avail, he turned to meditation and at last he attained enlightenment (c. 528). The remainder of his life he spent in elaborating and preaching his doctrines. His noble character and the simplicity of his teaching attracted thousands of followers, and his disciples eventually carried his religion to almost every part of Asia. Gautama was one of the world's great religious teachers, who amply deserves the epithet conferred upon him in the title of Sir Edwin Arnold's famous poem, sympathetically recounting the mythological version of his life and teaching—"The Light of Asia."

**Buddhist
ethics**

Buddhist doctrine is primarily ethical, but it rests upon a philosophical view of the world. The essence of this philosophy is set forth succinctly in "Four Noble Truths" which (1) affirm the universality of suffering, (2) attribute this suffering to selfish desire, (3) declare that it may be ended by rooting out such desire, and (4) teach the "Noble Eightfold Path" for doing so. The Eightfold Path—the code of Buddhist morality—requires Right Understanding (of Buddhist philosophy), Right Attitude of Mind, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Recollection, Right Meditation. In simpler terms, it teaches that a man should cease from sin, practice virtue, and purify his heart; and according to its "Five Precepts," the sins one should particularly avoid are killing, stealing, unchastity, lying, and the use of intoxicating liquors. The teaching of "the compassionate Buddha" laid great stress upon gentleness, patience, peacefulness, purity, and above all, sympathy with every living creature.

**Buddhist
doctrines**

Gautama retained the Brahman beliefs about *karma* and reincarnation, but he taught that virtuous actions, accumulated through many incarnations, would so purify a man's soul that, freed from the cycle of rebirth, he would at last enter Nirvana. This Nirvana, which is the great end of all human existence, is not complete extinction, as is sometimes erroneously supposed, but something akin to Christian



BUDDHA PREACHING HIS FIRST SERMON. This statue dates from the great days of the Gupta period, about A.D. 450. Ever since Maurya times, statues of the Buddha had been much influenced by Greek artistic traditions, but under the Guptas they became completely Indianized. (*Archeological Survey of India*)



MAHABODHI TEMPLE. This temple at Bodhi Gaya, near Benares, supposedly marks the spot where the Buddha taught after his Enlightenment. Replacing a simple shrine erected by Asoka about 300 B.C., parts of the present structure go back to the first century before Christ. The temple has been remodeled and extended several times, and in the nineteenth century it was restored by Japanese, Burmese, and Ceylonese Buddhists after nine centuries of neglect. (*Archeological Survey of India*)

"salvation." Or perhaps it resembles what popular preachers have in mind today when they speak of "peace of soul." It will be noted that in all this discussion nothing is said about gods or spirits. Gautama did not explicitly deny the existence of the old gods, but neither did he invoke them, worship them, or offer sacrifices to them. Early Buddhism was essentially "atheistic."

In spite of his princely origin, Gautama was completely democratic. Disregarding the caste system, he drew his followers from every class of society, and his way of salvation was open to all mankind. In his lifetime, Gautama organized his followers in a church or order. He undoubtedly hoped that some day everyone would be a member of this congregation, but the rules of the order were so austere that not everyone could follow them—and life would be impossible if everyone did follow them faithfully. There were therefore many persons who sympathized with the teachings of Gautama, and lived up to them as best they could, but who did not make the Great Renunciation and enter the order. The monks were members of an organized Buddhist community, which they joined by making a threefold profession, "I take refuge in the Buddha, I take refuge in the Doctrine, I take refuge in the Order." From the days of Gautama himself, Buddhist monks were distinguished by their yellow robes, their shaven heads, and their beggar's bowls. Living by begging, they spent much of their time in meditation but, taking a middle way between worldliness and asceticism, they did not practice the rigors of the Jainists, and their monasteries, donated by wealthy patrons, sometimes became famous centers of learning.

**Buddhist
monks**

Buddhism spread widely in India during the next few centuries, but it never won a majority of the people, and in later times it lost ground so sadly that there are very few Buddhists in India today. Nevertheless Buddhism is an important religion in most other Asiatic countries, and its 150 million adherents make it fourth in numbers among the world's religions. In the early centuries of the Christian Era Buddhism divided into two major and several minor sects, with its original form best preserved in the Hinayana ("Lesser Vehicle") Buddhism of Ceylon, Burma, and Indochina, though greater numbers adhere to the Mahayana ("Greater Vehicle") form now practiced in Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea, and Japan. Mahayana Buddhism has found a place for the old popular deities, it recognizes saints who have helped others to achieve salvation, and it accords divine honors to Buddha as a universal savior.

**Buddhist
sects**

Hinduism

The last of the great Indian religions, Hinduism, is professed today by more than 250 million persons in India, but it has not spread widely outside the peninsula. Though it took form in the centuries immediately before and after the birth of Christ, its continued development has caused it to divide into innumerable sects. Hinduism is therefore a highly conglomerate religion, showing features derived from every phase of India's past, and in one or another of its many forms it appeals to people on every social and intellectual level. Maintaining old beliefs and practices, it preserves the old Indian beliefs about *karma* and the transmigration of souls, it promises salvation or release from this cycle of existences, and while it finds a place for the begging monk or "holy man," it makes its appeal primarily to the average man who is not prepared for the Great Renunciation. Hinduism insists that man achieves salvation, not by the ascetic practices of the Jainists or by Buddhist wisdom, but by the love and worship of savior gods.

**Siva and
Vishnu**

The great gods of the Vedas play a rather minor role in this religion, and the most prominent places in the Hindu pantheon go to the pre-Aryan Siva and Vishnu. Siva was an ancient vegetation and fertility god, whom the Greeks identified with Dionysus, and he is still worshiped by the humbler classes in India with noisy and orgiastic rites. Though the giver of life, Siva is also a destroyer and is often depicted in hideous forms. Vishnu too began as a fertility god, but he has assumed many new forms for, unlike Siva, he has repeatedly become incarnate in men. His most famous *avatars* (incarnations) were as Rama, hero of the Ramayana epic, and as Krishna. Krishna was a mythical warrior who took part in the Great Bharata War, as recounted in the other great Sanskrit epic. Embodied in this second epic is a section called the "Bhagavad-Gita" ("The Song of God"), dating from the second century before Christ and telling of Krishna's life and sufferings. It remains the most popular book of Hinduism, sometimes being called the Hindu Gospel. The theory of reincarnation enabled Hinduism to teach that Krishna and the other *avatars* of Vishnu were at the same time truly God and truly man, that a true god had suffered in men's behalf, and that the many gods of primitive times were early incarnations of Vishnu. The third of the great gods of Hinduism, Brahma the Creator, is worshiped less ardently than the other two. Hindu theologians often describe these three deities—Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer—as three aspects of one God, which they thus present as a *Trimurti*, or Trinity. This Hindu Trinity has little in common, however, with the

Christian Trinity. Benares is the sacred city of Hinduism, full of imposing temples, and the Ganges is its sacred river.

Indian Empires

The Aryans conquered most of the Ganges Valley before 600 B.C., but the region they occupied fell into several principalities, of which the most important were Taxila, in the northwest, and Magadha on the eastern frontier. In the following century Cyrus the Great (550–529) annexed Taxila and the greater part of the Indus Valley to his Persian Empire, and Darius (521–486) organized them as his twentieth satrapy. This province annually sent large quantities of gold to the king, and it contributed a quota of archers to the army with which Xerxes invaded Greece in 480. Most of the Indian satrapy was subsequently lost, however, and when Alexander invaded the upper Indus Valley (326) he found it in the hands of native kings whose rivalries greatly aided his conquest. He bought the friendship of the king of Taxila, defeated this man's neighbor, and was preparing to advance against Magadha when his mutinous army forced him to turn back. Many Greeks were impressed by what they saw, but neither Alexander nor his immediate successors made a notable impression upon India.

**Alexander
the Great
in India**

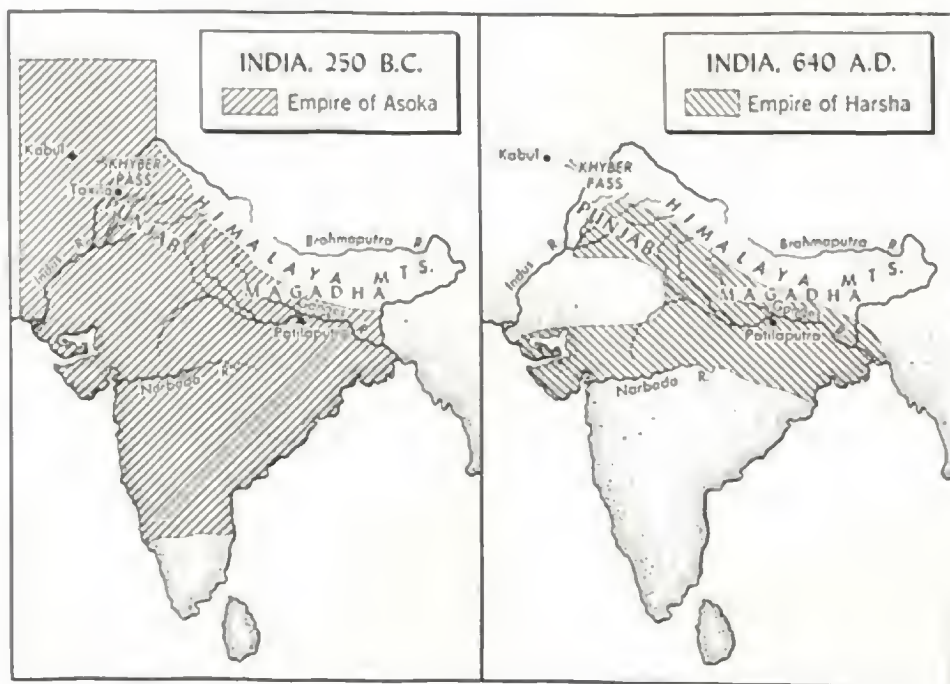
At the same time important events were taking place in Magadha. A young man named Chandragupta Maurya, who claimed royal descent though born of a low-caste mother and whose activities had caused him to be exiled from his native country, met Alexander in 326 and apparently urged him to invade Magadha. Shortly after Alexander's death (323) this man seized the throne of Magadha and conquered most of northern India. When one of Alexander's successors (Seleucus I, 312–280) attempted to reconquer the Indian province (c. 305), he was defeated and forced to surrender parts of the modern Afghanistan and Baluchistan—in return for which he received five hundred elephants. A few years later a Greek named Megasthenes visited India as Seleucus's envoy, reaching Chandragupta's capital at Pataliputra (now Patna), and afterward he described the country in an interesting book. From his book and from Sanskrit sources we know the Maurya period of Indian history better than any preceding one, and historians ordinarily date "historic times" in India from the foundation of Chandragupta's empire (323 B.C.).

**Chandra-
gupta**

The records picture Chandragupta as a tyrannical despot, sur-

Asoka

rounded by courtesans and always fearful of assassination. (Megasthenes reports that he never slept in the same bed on two successive nights.) Nevertheless, he organized a strong army and an efficient administration, and during his reign India prospered. It is alleged that in his last days he was converted to Jainism, abdicated, and slowly starved himself to death. He was followed by his son, who conquered much of the Deccan, and this man was succeeded, in his turn, by his son Asoka (273-232), the most famous of Indian kings. Continuing the conquests, Asoka subdued all India except the southern tip, and he bound his empire together by a great system of improved highways. He was the first and last native ruler to unite virtually all India under his sway. Asoka became a convert to Buddhism (allegedly because of his horror at the bloodshed accompanying his conquests) and in his later years he sent out missionaries who peacefully converted Ceylon and other foreign countries to this religion. Literature and art flourished in his day, and India's cultural influence began to be felt outside the peninsula. Asoka's successors were not men of ability, however, and when the last of the Maurya kings was murdered (185 B.C.), the empire quickly fell to pieces.



Almost at once the Indus Valley was invaded by Greeks from Bactria, a province including much of the modern Afghanistan and southern Turkestan. Bactria had fallen to the Seleucids when Alexander's empire was divided (see page 120), but in the next century its Greek ruler became virtually an independent king. This man's son Demetrius (c. 189–c. 167) subjugated most of eastern and central Iran and captured Taxila (c. 175). A Greek general named Menander even entered Pataliputra but, being unable to hold that city, he established the Greek capital at Sagala, near Taxila. Various Greek and Mongol invaders then dominated the Indus Valley for about five hundred years.

**Greek and
Asiatic
invaders**

During these long centuries, the valley of the Ganges was ruled by dynasties of Brahmans. Early in the fourth century after Christ, however, the ancient state of Magadha again produced a line of warrior kings who reconstructed the old empire. This dynasty, known as the Guptas, was founded by a man bearing the historic name Chandragupta. After marrying a princess of Magadha and conquering a few nearby states he proclaimed a new era (A.D. 320). His conquests were continued by his son, Samudragupta (c. 330–380), who conquered the rest of the Ganges Valley and led raids into the Deccan almost to Madras, and by his grandson, Chandragupta II (380–415), who pushed his frontiers west to the Arabian Sea. In the fifth century India, like Europe, was thrown into confusion by the inroads of the Huns. While Attila was devastating Europe (447–453; see page 243), other Huns were invading Persia from the north (see page 298), and still others entered India from the northwest in 455. Others came in great numbers in the sixth century, inflicting terrible damage and shattering the Gupta Empire. Early in the next century, however, a new Magadhan king arose in the person of Harsha (606–647), who reconquered most of the territory that had once been held by the Guptas. The period of the Gupta kings and Harsha (320–647) is often called the "golden age" of Indian culture, but Harsha was the last native Indian king of importance, and after his death a decline began. The Ganges Valley was again broken into tiny principalities, and almost six centuries elapsed before Moslem conquerors restored political unity to northern India.

**The Gupta
Empire**

Not much is known of the kingdoms that followed the Maurya Empire in the Deccan and southern India. The peoples of the Deccan had by this time adopted Aryan languages, akin to Sanskrit, and Buddhism had made progress among them, but after the fall of the

**Southern
kingdoms**

Mauryas, native dynasties rose and fell in bewildering confusion. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Chola kingdom, reaching south from near Madras, was perhaps the most prosperous and civilized part of India.

**Moslem
invaders
(712-1526)**

The first Moslem invaders entered India in 712, just a year after their coreligionists had overrun Spain, and they quickly subjugated Sind, the province occupying the lower Indus Valley. This initial victory was not followed by others, however, and during the confusion attending the fall of the Ommyad dynasty and the rise of the Abbassids (see page 305) native leaders expelled the intruders from India (c. 750). No further Moslem invasions were attempted for two centuries and a half, but beginning about A.D. 1000 a second great wave of Islamic expansion, instigated by the Turks, brought new conquerors to India. Though professing Islam, these invaders paid little attention to the caliph at Baghdad, who was a prisoner of their Seljuk kinsmen (see page 337). Establishing their capital at Delhi, they ruled an empire almost as large as Asoka's. They drove off various attackers from the north, but at last Tamerlane (see page 341) sacked Delhi, slew 100,000 persons in cold blood, and withdrew, leaving anarchy, famine, and pestilence behind him (1398). More than a century later Tamerlane's descendant at the fifth generation, Baber, invaded India (1526) from Afghanistan, and Baber's grandson, Akbar (1556-1605), created the Mogul Empire which ruled most of India. These Moslem conquerors usually were more interested in plundering India than in governing it, and lurid tales were told of the intrigues and debaucheries at their courts. The English defeated the Moguls in the eighteenth century, however, and the last remnants of their empire were swept away in 1858.

Indian Culture in the Golden Age

**Peasant
farmers**

The Aryan invaders of India had been warriors and herdsmen, but even in Vedic times agriculture was superseding cattle raising, and from that day to this most of the Indian people have been peasant farmers. They have lived quietly in their ancient villages, tilling their fields by time-honored methods with oxen and primitive plows and managing local affairs in traditional ways through local councils. They have been ground down ruthlessly by the higher powers, but the wealth of India has come from their labors.

Ever since Vedic times, however, there have been traders and artisans in India, the artisans showing great skill and the traders going far afield on their expeditions. In the sixth century before Christ the best iron and steel in the world were made in India. When Alexander the Great arrived (326), his Greeks were amazed at the splendor of the cities they saw and the rich gifts they received. During the next several centuries caravans connected the Greek world of the Seleucids with the northwestern provinces of India while others from this same part of India reached China. In the first century after Christ Greek traders learned to take advantage of the monsoon winds when sailing from the Red Sea to India and back. The cities of southern India then became important trading centers, rivaling those on the northern caravan routes. The peoples of the Roman Empire bought spices, precious stones, and other articles of small bulk, but having little to export in exchange, they were forced to pay for these luxuries with cash. Enormous hoards of Roman gold coins, dating from the first two centuries after Christ, have been found in southern India, not only along the Malabar Coast, but also along the eastern coast as far north as Madras and near a few inland cities. Traders from the west apparently built a temple to Augustus in at least one southern city. After the decline of the Roman Empire, the merchants of southern India traded with the Moslems, and later still with southeastern Asia and even with faraway China. In the ninth century an Arab traveler enthusiastically described an Indian king in the Deccan as one of the four great sovereigns of the earth—the other three being the caliph of Baghdad, the Byzantine emperor, and the emperor of China!

In intellectual and cultural matters India reached her golden age in the days of the Gupta kings and Harsha (320-647). Though these kings accepted the Hindu religion, they were remarkably tolerant of Jainists and Buddhists, whose monasteries became centers of light and learning. The children of the upper classes were the only ones to receive any scholastic education at all, usually from Buddhist monks. A major item in every such education was learning Sanskrit, though this ancient language had long since been superseded in daily use by various Prakrit ("popular") dialects. Early Buddhist preaching and the first Buddhist scriptures were in Pali—a language bearing much the same relation to Sanskrit that modern Italian bears to Latin. But the rise of Hinduism revived Sanskrit as an artificial language for religious works, official documents, and scholarship, as well as for dramas, secular poetry, and other literary works.

Nalanda

Though many Buddhist monasteries had important schools attached to them, the most renowned of all was at Nalanda, not far from Pataliputra in Magadha. This institution has justly been called a university, and as an educational institution it far surpassed anything in Europe at that time. One of the Gupta kings set aside the revenue from one hundred large villages for its support and to supply needy students with food and clothing. In the seventh century the university was attended by thousands of students, both Buddhist and Hindu, who came from all parts of India and even from Tibet, China, and Korea. It is said that classes were held daily in one hundred lecture rooms, and that three large buildings housed a magnificent library. For several centuries this university was the intellectual center of India, but its buildings and books were burned, and its teachers executed or scattered, by fanatical Moslem invaders late in the twelfth century.

**Indian
science**

As might be expected, the principal subject of instruction at Nalanda and similar institutions was the theology of Mahayana Buddhism, but secular subjects were studied as well. The laws of Sanskrit grammar were refined to an amazing degree, as were the rules of logic. It was at this time that Indian mathematicians made their greatest progress and simplified procedures in arithmetic by their use of a circle for zero and by their introduction of the decimal system (see page 317). These inventions were soon adopted by the Moslems, who later carried them to Europe. Indian astronomers studied Greek astronomy, but they went beyond it, and their discoveries were later carried to Europe by the Moslems. Indian doctors were equally successful, and many of their practices were eventually adopted by Chinese, Arabian, and European physicians. It is said that Indian doctors inoculated patients with a mild form of cowpox to prevent smallpox—a practice that was brought to Europe from Turkey many centuries later.

**Story
books**

India also developed an important secular literature, of which the most popular examples were story books. Thus the *Panchatantra* was a collection of stories about animals. Though many of the tales were very old, they were first written down in early Gupta times. A Persian translation, made in the sixth century, was rendered into Arabic two hundred years later. In the eleventh century this Arabic text was put into Greek, and this in turn became the basis for a Latin translation made in the thirteenth century. The stories were somewhat modified in each version, and eventually they came to be attributed to an

ancient Greek named Aesop. As *Aesop's Fables* they are still popular as children's stories. Countless other stories of Indian origin have found their way into Europe by equally circuitous routes—among them such favorites as "Jack and the Beanstalk," "The Seven-League Boots," and "The Magic Mirror." An even more interesting fate befell an ancient tale of a more pious nature, recounting a mythical version of the life of the Buddha. Late in the seventh century it reached Damascus in Arabic translation, and was retold in Greek by St. John of Damascus (see page 332) under the title *Barlaam and Josaphat*. The hero of this tale, Josaphat, was in reality Gautama, but he was so pious a man that Christian readers decided he must be a saint. The founder of Buddhism thus came to be numbered among the saints of the Christian Church—an honor which he amply deserved.

A more highly developed form of literature was the Sanskrit drama. As is the case with the drama of ancient Greece or medieval Europe, it grew out of religious ceremonies. The poems of the Vedas sometimes offered opportunity for dialogue, and the worship of Siva and Vishnu often included elaborate and stately rituals, but only in Gupta times did a formal theater appear. About five hundred Sanskrit plays are still available, of which the most famous are those by a certain Kalidasa, who flourished about A.D. 400. The plays often seem as artificial and conventional as the Sanskrit language in which they are written, but they hold an honored place in the classic literature of India. Kalidasa was also the author of two long narrative poems, dealing with events in the heroic age, and he stands high among India's great lyric poets. Other Indian poets of ability appeared during the next few centuries, until Jayadeva published his *Gita-govinda* ("Song of Govinda, or Krishna") late in the twelfth century. This famous poem deals with the love of Krishna for a milkmaid, but it usually is given an allegorical interpretation as depicting the yearning of an individual soul for union with the divine. It still remains one of the most popular devotional books in India, and its English translator (Sir Edwin Arnold) called it "The Indian Song of Songs" because of its resemblance, in spirit, to the Old Testament book of that name.

The other arts flourished as well in Gupta times, but less is known today of the artists and their works. Many of the Vedas were chanted, and the lyric poetry—including the *Gita-govinda*—was intended to be sung, but in spite of formal treatises on the subject, not much is known of the nature of Indian music. Indian love of both music and dancing is shown, however, by the many aristocratic persons who boast of their

**Sanskrit
drama**

**Other
arts**



DANCING SIVA. The many-armed dancing Siva was a popular theme in Hindu art. This example dates only from the fifteenth century, but others are several centuries older. The continued popularity of the theme is illustrated by the fact that the Republic of India has recently issued a postage stamp showing such a statue. (*Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*)

skill in these arts. From early times, likewise, the Indians were fond of jewelry and personal ornaments, and the works of their jewelers greatly impressed the Greeks in the days of Alexander as well as the Europeans of early modern times. Architecture was another of the arts to flourish under the Guptas, but many of its finest creations, being temples, were ruthlessly destroyed by fanatical Moslem conquerors. The Vedas make no mention of temples, but even in Dravidian times sanctuaries had been cut into solid rock in the Deccan. Hindus, Buddhists, and Jainists made similar temples in the opening centuries of the Christian Era, and under the Guptas elaborate stone structures were built in many parts of India. An impressive native style of architecture was developed that is still used in some parts of India—though the Moslem conquerors later introduced Persian styles, as with the famous Taj Mahal at Agra. Both the cave temples and the later structures were lavishly decorated with carvings and paintings. Strange to say, however, sculpture is the one Indian art which underwent definite Greek influence. For a century or two after Alexander, statues of the Apollo type were popular in India, but Indian styles gradually came to prevail, and later statues of the sad Buddha or the many-armed dancing Siva show few traces of their Apollonian ancestry.

Indian Culture Outside India

From the end of the Vedic period through Gupta times, the center of Indian culture lay in the Ganges Valley, where Aryans and Dravidians were mingling, and where their respective cultures were gradually being amalgamated by Hinduism. During these centuries, too, Aryan conquerors were pushing into the Deccan, carrying their languages and the new composite culture with them. Southern India was becoming civilized, but not until the first century of the Christian Era was Tamil reduced to writing, and the other Dravidian languages followed even later. A considerable Tamil literature grew up, but it was not comparable in extent, variety, or importance to the Sanskrit literature of the north. Buddhism and Jainism made many converts in southern India but here, as in the north, Buddhism was eventually superseded by Hinduism.

**Southern
India**

The region outside India to be most deeply influenced by Indian culture was Ceylon. In early times this island, off the southeastern coast of India, was inhabited by a people known as the Veddas (no connection with the Vedas), who presumably were akin to the early

Ceylon

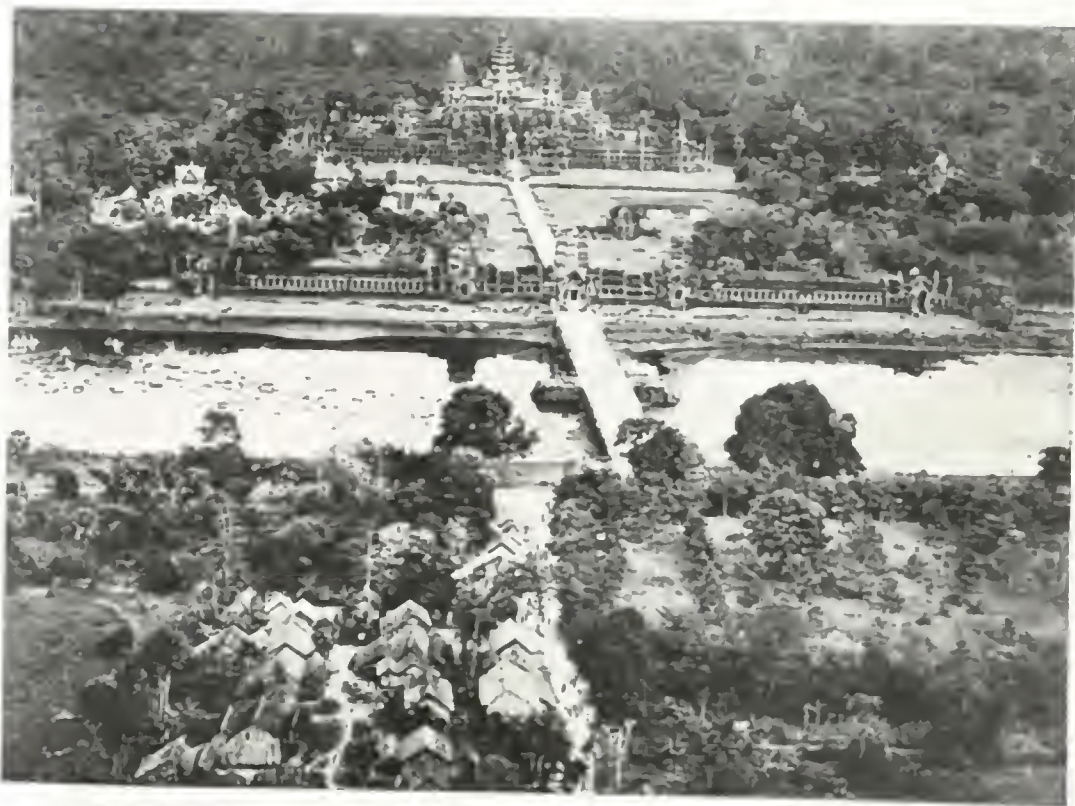
Negritos of the mainland; considerable numbers of Veddas still inhabit the interior of the island but they now speak an Aryan language. Toward the middle of the sixth century before Christ, a tribe of Aryans known as the Singhalese conquered the island, imposing their language and culture: almost 80 percent of the Ceylonese speak dialects of Pali today. Some two centuries later Buddhist monks began to reach Ceylon, and presently they converted the island to their religion. About two-thirds of the people of Ceylon are Buddhist today—the rest being Hindus, with a scattering of Moslems and Christians—and Ceylon is now the world center of Hinayana or old-fashioned Buddhism. Though Ceylon has since been invaded several times by south Indian princes, and about a fifth of the people now speak dialects of Tamil, the island has usually maintained its independence, and today it is quite distinct from India, culturally as well as politically. Nevertheless, its cultural debt to India is enormous.

*Southeast
Asia*

Meantine Indian culture was also spreading eastward over the Bay of Bengal into Burma, Siam, and Indochina. These regions, as we have seen (page 352), were the first home of the early neolithic civilization that was brought to India, apparently by the ancestors of the Munda-speaking peoples now inhabiting the lower Ganges Valley, and Burma is still inhabited by many peoples speaking languages of this family. Since these neolithic times, however, the whole of southeastern Asia had been overrun by invaders from China and, at a later time, by Indians from both northern and southern India. Legend relates that Buddhist missionaries reached Burma in the days of Asoka (c. 250 n.c.), and it is clear that Buddhism was well established in that region before the beginning of the Christian Era. During the next several centuries traders from southern India were active there, and the native rulers were much influenced by Indian secular culture as well as by Buddhism and Hinduism.

*Angkor
Thom*

We need not list the confusing series of native dynasties which ruled parts of the peninsula during these centuries, but mention should be made of the Malayan pirates, usually called Chams, who were slowly tamed under Indian influence and whose empire, founded in the second century after Christ, endured for more than a thousand years. Highly ornamented Cham temples to Siva and Vishnu were common, but Buddhism made little progress among this warlike people. Most important of all were the Khmers of modern Cambodia, a Buddhist people whose power began about the middle of the sixth century and who were destroyed by the Siamese in the fourteenth.



ANGKOR WAT. This enormous temple to Buddha was erected in Cambodia in the twelfth century.

Their capital city at Angkor Thom was destroyed, deserted, and forgotten until a French explorer discovered it in 1861. The site was then overgrown with thick jungle, but when archeologists had cleared it, they found the ruins of one of the most marvelous cities in Asia. Angkor Wat, built in the twelfth century, remains the largest temple in the world, a triumph of Indian architecture. It is decorated with many statues of Buddha and carvings of scenes from the Sanskrit epics. After the destruction of the Khmers, Chinese culture regained its former supremacy in the peninsula.

The Malay Peninsula and the islands of Indonesia--notably Sumatra, Java, and Borneo--were likewise visited by Indian missionaries and traders in the opening centuries of the Christian Era. The Malay peoples inhabiting these islands were still quite primitive, and Indian adventurers were able to carve out great kingdoms for themselves, setting a pattern for the Dutch and English many centuries later.

Indonesia

Indian culture came to exercise a deep influence upon the natives. Several Sanskrit inscriptions dating from the fourth and fifth centuries have been discovered, and though the natives still speak Malay languages, they have added many Indian words, and their form of writing is based on Sanskrit. The first Indians to establish themselves in the islands were Hindus, but Buddhist monks soon followed, and for several centuries these two religions existed side by side. The islanders also adopted Indian artistic traditions, and their temples, built in Indian style, were lavishly decorated with Indian sculpture and other works of art. The Moslem conquest of India put an end to this commercial and cultural expansion of India. Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and Cambodia have remained Buddhist, but by 1500 Malaya and the islands had turned to Islam.

**Central
and
eastern
Asia**

While Indian culture and religion were thus expanding eastward across the seas, other merchants and missionaries were carrying them along the great caravan routes to central and eastern Asia. Exploration in the twentieth century has discovered many ancient cities at oases along these routes in western China, and it has been shown that while trade here was largely in the hands of Chinese merchants, dress and etiquette were copied from Persia, and religion, learning, and art were largely of Indian origin. The oldest Buddhist manuscripts in existence, dating from the second century after Christ, were found in the large library of a deserted monastery at Khotan. From these oases and their monasteries, Buddhist books and Buddhist monks reached China proper as early as 2 B.C. Here the new religion made steady progress, and Buddhist scriptures were eagerly studied in many parts of China. Much of our knowledge of India under the Guptas is derived from the writings of a Chinese Buddhist monk, Fa Hsien, who made the long journey to India in order to collect manuscripts, which he took back to China (399-414). Other pilgrims followed during the next few centuries. Beginning in 629 a certain Hsüan Tsang spent several years studying at the university in Nalanda, and he has left us a full account of his experiences. Chinese Buddhist monks first entered Korea in 372, where the new religion was formally recognized in 528. Buddhist scriptures reached Japan from Korea in 538, and Indian missionaries arrived a little later.

**Central
Asiatic
Buddhism**

Buddhist missionaries entered Nepal, on India's northern frontier, in the first century after Christ, and a thousand years later countless Indian Buddhists fled to that mountain country before the fury of Moslem invaders. Tibet achieved a national government only in the

seventh century after Christ, but Buddhism was soon adopted as its official religion, and during most of its history the country has been governed by Buddhist monks. The Burmese and the various islanders accepted Hinayana Buddhism, but the peoples of central and eastern Asia received the Mahayana variety, which reformers modified considerably to suit their national characters. Mahayana Buddhism was thus split into many sects, but the most ardent Buddhists in the world today adhere to this faction.

23. CHINA AND THE FAR EAST

Geography of China

GEOGRAPHICALLY China, like India, is a part of Asia, but it is even more sharply separated from the rest of the continent by natural frontiers. To the north is the Gobi Desert and to the west and south are almost impenetrable mountain ranges. Other mountains cut off central China from the shores of the Pacific, and the whole western half of the country is a confusion of mountain and desert. China's total area is about 3,850,000 square miles (more than 25 percent greater than that of continental United States), but her population of over 500 million is concentrated in a few areas—the valley of the Hwang Ho, or Yellow River, that of the Yangtze, and Kwangtung, the southern coastal region around Canton. As the soil of the great river valleys is fertile and their climate temperate, and as Kwangtung enjoys a subtropical climate, these regions are among the most densely populated in the world. Constituting "China proper," they are the home of Chinese civilization.

Racial homo- geneity

China's geographical isolation has rendered her population remarkably homogeneous for so large an area. When the bones of *Sinanthropus* were found near Peking several years ago (see page 7), authorities sometimes claimed that the modern Chinese are descended from this ancient race, but such claims are very doubtful. The modern Chinese are members of the Mongoloid race, and therefore distantly related to the American Indians and to the Malayan peoples of Indonesia, but they are more closely akin to the Koreans and the Japanese. Surrounding China proper are several peoples of more primitive culture—Mongols, Turks, Tibetans, and others—but they too are Mongoloids, and the differences between them and the Chinese are cultural rather than racial. The Chinese occupy the fertile farm lands while these other peoples are pastoral nomads on the steppes or

mountaineers dwelling in high valleys. These nomads have often invaded lands held by the Chinese, but the invaders have never been numerous, and within a generation or two they have become thoroughly Chinese.

China has not been well explored archeologically, but our slight information seems to indicate that paleolithic civilization was fairly widespread there, and that it developed into neolithic in several separate areas. The best known of the neolithic cultures arose along the Hwang Ho about 3000 B.C. and eventually spread to all China. Its principal grain was millet; pigs and other animals were domesticated; men lived in villages consisting of rude huts; and artisans developed styles of pottery that have remained popular in China down to the present day. On the lower Hwang Ho the pottery was black, but in the region of the river's great bend it was painted in ways reminiscent of

**Neolithic
cultures**



Near Eastern styles, suggesting connections of some sort between China and southwestern Asia, even at this early date.

**Mythical
history**

Unlike the peoples of India, whose intellectual leaders have shown little interest in their past, the Chinese have always been historically-minded. From early times they kept records and wrote rather elaborate histories. Western scholars formerly maintained that these histories had no value for the period before 1000 B.C., but in recent years archeologists have found some truth underlying their narratives of events as early as 1500 B.C. The histories speak of kings who conferred great benefits upon mankind even before that date, and as these benefits are those ordinarily associated with neolithic civilization, we may say that the early chronicles give a highly mythical version of what actually happened. Thus we are told of a dynasty of Hsia (pronounced She-a) emperors who ruled from 2205 to 1766—or, according to a less common but perhaps more accurate computation, from 1994 to 1524 B.C. These dates are far too precise, and the Hsia ruled only a small part of the country, but they may now be accorded a vague historicity as the first known rulers in China.

**The Shang
dynasty**

The chronicles also tell us that the Hsia emperors were succeeded by those of the Shang dynasty (1766–1122, or more probably, 1523–1028), which consisted of thirty emperors whose names are given. It was formerly believed that these kings, too, were purely mythical, but the names of twenty-three of them have now been found on contemporary inscriptions. Moreover, one of their ancient capitals—Anyang, on a tributary of the Hwang Ho—has recently been excavated by archeologists. Dating from about 1400 B.C., this city gives a fine example of early Chinese culture, and it definitely establishes the historicity of the Shang dynasty. Thousands of bones marked with writing were unearthed, and it was found that in Shang times the Chinese knew how to cast bronze, weave silk, and carve jade. The Shang emperors probably ruled only a few hundred square miles around Anyang, but the foundations of Chinese culture were firmly laid in this region and at this time.

**Chou
conquests**

The Shang dynasty was overthrown and succeeded by the Chou (pronounced Jo) dynasty, which ruled for eight hundred years (c. 1028–221 B.C.). The Chou people lived west of the Shang, along the Wei Ho, and while they were as Chinese as their neighbors, their culture was on a lower level. They were better warriors, however, and during the next few centuries they extended their power down the Hwang Ho to the sea, and southward into the Yangtze Valley. In the

eighth century the dynasty began to weaken, and while the Chou kings continued to reign at Loyang, local lords were constantly usurping more and more power. The shadowy Chou empire then fell into about twenty-five mutually hostile and frequently warring principalities. Finally the Chous were overthrown by a military conqueror from Ch'in, a state west of theirs. This dynasty ruled for only fifteen years (221-206), but its conquests ranged far and wide. Even Kwangtung was added to its domain. Its founder assumed the title "Emperor of Ch'in," which was retained by all subsequent rulers until 1912, and from which comes our name for the whole country—China.

Early Chinese Culture

The conquest of the Shangs by the Chous, like that of the Chous by the Ch'ins, and like most subsequent political changes in China, exercised only a slight influence upon the development of Chinese civilization. The Chous readily absorbed the culture of the Shangs, but they added little that was really new. Moreover, the Shang culture, which had grown out of a neolithic culture that prevailed throughout central China, was readily adopted by neighboring peoples. Military conquest sometimes hastened the process, and eventually the whole of China accepted it. The elaborate Chinese civilization of modern times is largely a refinement of this early Shang culture.

Down to the present day, most Chinese have been peasant farmers. Agriculture began in the Hwang Ho Valley as early as 3000 B.C., but at first its progress was slow, and China's population undoubtedly was small. Simple irrigation canals may have been dug even in Hsia times, but the plow did not come until Shang times, and the ox-drawn plow apparently was not introduced until about 300 B.C. The neolithic culture of the Hsias was succeeded by the Bronze Age culture of the Shangs, but scholars are not yet agreed as to how the Chinese learned to cast bronze. Was it a native invention, or did they learn it from the West? Most writers now prefer the latter alternative, though they are not clear as to just how a knowledge of metallurgy reached China. It is interesting to note, however, that bronzes of the Shang era are superior to those cast under the Chous, and that these are better than still later work. Moreover, China is poor in metals, and the tin required for making bronze probably was brought by traders from faraway Malaya. The high development of trade implied by this theory is further evidenced by the many walled towns and cities of the Shang

**Continuity
of Chinese
cultural
history**

**China's
economic
evolution**

period. But bronze remained an article of luxury for the rich. Iron was not introduced until the fifth century before Christ, several hundred years after it had become common in the Near East and India. As China is well provided with iron, its use spread rapidly in all classes of society.

**Family
basis of
society**

Early Chinese society, like that of primitive peoples generally, was organized on a family basis, but in China the family was—and has remained—more powerful than almost anywhere else on earth. The power of the father was absolute, even over the life and death of his children, and this power passed to his wife if she survived him. Family loyalty was considered the greatest of virtues, far surpassing loyalty to the state, and filial piety led to exaggerated respect for all aged persons. The family as a whole was responsible for the conduct of each of its members. The right and duty of blood vengeance was recognized by the state, and a man might be punished for the misconduct of another member of his family. Moreover, the Chinese family was a much larger affair than the ordinary American family for it included persons of several generations, rather distant cousins, and, in theory at least, all its dead ancestors. China had no caste system comparable to that of India, and there were no untouchables, but a man's position in the world rose and declined only with that of his family. The family was the solid foundation of all Chinese society, and ideas regarding it dominated all Chinese thinking on religion, ethics, and politics.

**Chinese
writing**

Early in the present century scholars began studying the writing on certain bones, dating from about 1400 B.C., which had been plowed up in the vicinity of Anyang. They soon discovered that this writing, like that of early Egypt and Sumeria, was pictographic, with each character representing one word but giving no hint as to how that word should be pronounced. The earliest Chinese writing was simply a drawing of the thing mentioned, though in modern writing the picture usually is quite unrecognizable. Scribes soon developed great ingenuity in devising characters for things that could not be drawn, and sometimes they even permitted themselves a certain sly humor. Thus the Chinese character for "father" represents a hand holding a stick, that for "mother" is a woman with a broom, and a character showing two women standing together means "to quarrel."

**China's
classic
literature**

The oldest Chinese book now extant is the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, a collection of magic formulas, some of which may date from Shang times. The *Shu Ching*, or *Document Classic*, is an important collection of political speeches and documents dating from early Chou

times. The *Shih Ching*, or *Book of Poetry*, contains about three hundred poems: there are odes to be chanted during sacrifices and there are lyrics, but apparently the early Chinese had no epics comparable to those of Greece or India. Another early book is the *Tso Chuan*, a history covering the years 722 to 468 B.C. And finally comes the *I Li*, or *Book of Etiquette*. Its elaborate instructions as to how to act on every occasion show that the Chinese were already devoted to that social ceremony and punctilio for which they later became noted. These early books, known as the Five Classics, were completed in the fifth century before Christ and have been the basis of literary education ever since.

When scholars deciphered the antique writing on the bones from Anyang, they found that these bones had been used as oracles. After a question had been written on it, the bone was baked until it cracked, and the shape of the crack indicated the oracle's answer. Countless passages in the *I Ching* attest the addiction of the early Chinese to magic. Other literary evidence shows that they peopled the world with spirits of many kinds. Some represented the facts or forces of nature, such as the Earth or the Wind; others were the souls of ancestors; others were ghosts; and the greatest of them all was Shang Ti, whose name may be translated "the Ruler Above," or "the Heavenly Ruler." The early Chinese worshiped all these spirits, but especially those associated with their ancestors. Ancestor worship thus became an important aspect of Chinese family life, and its shrines were the scene of family reunions for sacrifice or for such family events as weddings and funerals. The worship of the emperor's ancestors became a state cult, and its temples were important public buildings.

**Early
religions**

The political theory of the early Chinese kings was in conformity with their ideas regarding family organization and religion. The king was supposed to conduct himself as a father to his people, and while many kings may have overemphasized the authoritarian nature of this paternalism, there were always people to remind them that they also had duties and obligations toward their subjects. The kings also invoked divine authority, claiming to rule as representatives of the gods, and from Chou times onward they called themselves "Sons of Heaven." This doctrine too could be used against excessive absolutism, for it was argued that if a king ceased to represent the gods and became wicked, he should be dethroned and rule given to someone else. In fact, the Chou kings used this argument to justify their destruction of the Shang, and in later times other kings were overthrown on the

**Political
theory and
practice**

same pretext. But though the king might claim to rule by the "decrees of Heaven," the day-by-day work of government was done by a large, intelligent, and well-trained bureaucracy of officials known as "mandarins." The founder of the Chou dynasty, being a simple military conqueror, quickly found that he needed expert help in governing if he was to retain his conquests. He therefore established this bureaucracy, the first of its kind. Mandarins were carefully trained for their tasks, and presently this training came to consist largely of a careful study of the Five Classics and the works of Confucius and other Chinese philosophers. To these philosophers and their theories we must therefore turn.

China's Classic Philosophers

Nature of Chinese philosophy

The classic age of Chinese philosophy lay between 550 and 300 B.C. Western writers have often noted that these years were also marked by the rise of Buddhism, Jainism, and Zoroastrianism, by famous Hebrew prophets, and by the flowering of Greek literature and philosophy. But why did religion and philosophy attain their finest expression in such widely separated countries at almost the same time? No answer to this question can be given, but a study of the social and political conditions in China during those years suggests reasons why Chinese philosophy took the form it did. After the Chou dynasty had broken down, and China had fallen into many independent and warring states, men desperately sought ways to end this anarchy, and philosophers turned their attention to social problems. It therefore came about that while Indians were speculating about the soul and fate, or declaring the material world to be an illusion, the Chinese thought about man and his relation to society. Other peoples thought in religious and theological terms, but the thinking of the Chinese, being humane and ethical, devoted little attention to God, the human soul, and immortality.

Confucius

The greatest of Chinese philosophers, K'ung Fu-tzu ("Master K'ung," 551-479), is better known in the West as Confucius, the Latin name given him by Jesuit missionaries in the seventeenth century. Unfortunately the story of Confucius's life has been so embellished by myth that it is now difficult to separate fact from legend. We know, however, that he was born in the state of Lu (in eastern China, Shantung today), the son of an impoverished member of the lesser nobility. In that time the road to preferment at court led through the

bureaucracy, and though a man of scholarly temperament, little skilled in the arts of the courtier, Confucius may have held a few minor offices in Lu. Prolonged study of the Chinese classics brought him a reputation as a teacher, and he gave young men instruction designed to fit them for government service. When almost sixty years of age he undertook an extensive tour through China, traveling from court to court in search of a ruler who would entrust him with a position of authority and allow him to put his theories into practice. He was graciously received everywhere because of his fame as a scholar, but he found no position that he would accept, and after returning to Lu he died at an advanced age.

For their knowledge of the teachings of Confucius, modern scholars rely largely upon the *Analects*, a collection of his sayings compiled by disciples a generation or two after his death. These sayings make it clear that Confucius was primarily a social and political reformer, with strongly humane tendencies, and that his larger views on the nature of man and the world were common-sense remarks intended to bolster his program of reform. Being much distressed at the state of China in his day, Confucius idealized the times described in the ancient Chinese classics and declared that China would again be happy if rulers and people returned to the virtuous life of those classic days. Like many another radical reformer, he presented his program as a return to antiquity, though the antiquity he praised so highly was really a utopia that had never existed at all. Declaring that "the proper aim of government is the welfare and happiness of the whole people," Confucius taught that this noble end could be attained only if the state were administered by officials of the highest character and knowledge. By knowledge he meant primarily a knowledge of the ways of men in classic times, and to develop character he expounded a system of ethics that compares favorably with the best in the world. Laying great emphasis upon such ancestral Chinese virtues as respect for parents and aged persons, family solidarity, good manners, and ceremoniousness, he declared that if everyone practiced these virtues, all would be well. He looked forward—or, as he believed, backward—to a coöperative commonwealth whose rulers would be wisely chosen from men possessing these qualifications, regardless of their social station.

**His
doctrines**

During later Chou times some of Confucius's disciples attained high office in various Chinese states, and others made reputations by developing the Master's doctrines. The most important of the latter

**His
disciples**

was Mêng-tzu or Mencius (c. 372-289), a pupil of Confucius's grandson, who wrote an important book on the Confucian philosophy. The coming of the Ch'in dynasty (221-206) was a disaster for philosophy and learning because these barbarous conquerors felt no need for such refinements of civilization. They vainly attempted to stamp out Confucianism by book burnings and similar measures, but under the Han dynasty (202 B.C.-A.D. 220) Confucius came into his own. Early in this period the Han rulers established the practice, retained until 1905, of recruiting their bureaucracy through competitive examinations on the Five Chinese Classics, the *Analects* and two other books about Confucius, and the works of Mencius. A national university, attended by thousands of students, was founded in 125 B.C. to teach these subjects, and countless elementary schools prepared youths to study them. For two thousand years China was governed by a bureaucracy whose members had spent many years in an intensive and admiring study of the thought of Confucius, and few men in history have equaled the influence of Confucius upon subsequent generations.

Lao-tzu

The other philosophers of China's golden age must receive briefer mention. First of all comes the problematic Lao-tzu. We do not know exactly when he lived, and we have only one brief but remarkable book bearing his name; even his name, which merely means "Old Man," may cover a number of persons. The *Tao Tê Ching* ("The Book of the Way and Its Power," sometimes translated as "The Way of Life") is a collection of philosophical poems, probably dating from the fifth or fourth century before Christ. In sharp contrast to the common-sense and matter-of-fact attitude of Confucius toward the natural world and his desire to have a share in government, Lao-tzu was a religious mystic who sought illumination through retirement and contemplation. Like most mystics, he held a low opinion of rites and ceremonies (of which Confucius approved), and he thought much about the gods, whom Confucius disregarded. His "Way" was a way to achieve personal consciousness of the divine, not a way to social reform. His followers came to be called Taoists, and eventually they absorbed much of the old religion and magic of ancient China into their system. Even in the twentieth century, Taoism rather than Confucianism is the popular religion of China.

Other philosophers

Mo Ti was a younger contemporary of Confucius, and like him a native of Lu. Like Confucius, too, he was much concerned with social problems, but he showed less respect for China's ancestral institutions, notably the family. Attributing the evils of his day to selfishness and

family feeling, he urged that family loyalty be extended to include all men, and he was conspicuous as a pacifist. Mo Ti was sharply criticized by Mencius, who claimed that any lessening of family power would result in anarchy, yet he too found many followers. At the opposite extreme were the philosophers of the "Legalist" school. Their low opinion of the human race caused them to insist that men can be kept in order only by strict laws ruthlessly enforced, and such views of course received official favor under the Ch'in dynasty. Many smaller schools of philosophy arose during these fertile centuries, each of which exercised an influence upon the others, and even the Confucianists learned from their rivals. In the long run, however, the conservative but humane and enlightened philosophy of Confucius prevailed among the intellectual and governing classes of China.

Imperial Dynasties

The rise of the Ch'in dynasty (221–206 B.C.) brought an end to the political disintegration that had crept over China in the last three or four centuries of the Chou period. The autocratic rule of the founder of the new dynasty made him unpopular, however, and his incompetent son was soon brushed aside. After a few years of confusion, the Han dynasty (202 B.C.–A.D. 220) seized power and, except for a brief interlude between A.D. 9 and 23, this line ruled China for more than four hundred years. The earlier Han emperors were military conquerors who added Fukien to the territories held by the Ch'ins, thereby uniting all China proper, and who extended their power far to the west and over part of Korea to the east. The period of their rule coincided almost exactly with the great days of Rome (Hannibal was defeated in 202 B.C. and Severus Alexander was murdered in A.D. 235) and it, like that of their European contemporaries, was marked by peace, prosperity, and material progress. China was governed by bureaucrats trained in the Confucian philosophy—which somewhat resembled the Stoicism of the great Roman emperors—and they paternalistically used the power of the state to promote the welfare of the people. Their empire, however, like that of Rome, eventually fell to pieces.

The pattern thus established was followed by Chinese history for several centuries thereafter, with unification and peace alternating with disintegration and political partition, but we need not trace each cycle in detail. After several centuries of disintegration and barbarian invasions from the west, China was again united by the short-lived Sui

**The Han
dynasty
(202 B.C.-
A.D. 220)**

**The T'ang
and Sung
dynasties**

dynasty (589-618), whose greatest achievement was linking the Hwang Ho with the Yangtze by the famous Grand Canal. It was succeeded by the T'ang dynasty (618-907), under whose enlightened rule China enjoyed a golden age. Its capital at Ch'ang-an (now Sian) was the largest and most beautiful in the world and its empire was the richest. The cycle was repeated once more, however, for the tenth century was a troubled period for China, and the country was only partially reunited by the Sung dynasty (960-1279). Northern China and the Hwang Ho Valley remained in the hands of the Khitans, a barbarian tribe from Manchuria, who established their capital at Peking ("Northern Capital"), and from whom the name "Cathay" for northern China is derived. The Sungs, on the other hand, ruled from Nanking ("Southern Capital"), on the Yangtze. In spite of this political division, China's culture received what was perhaps its finest expression at this time. The Chou, Han, T'ang, and Sung dynasties thus mark outstanding periods in China's long cultural history.

*Trade and
expansion
under the
Han kings*

The first Ch'in emperor constructed the famous Great Wall along China's northern frontier, hoping thereby to shut the barbarians out of China proper and enabling Chinese culture to expand southward. The conquest of the Yangtze Valley had already added rice and silk to the millet culture of the Hwang Ho, and the addition of Kwangtung brought more rice and silk as well as soybeans, tea, several kinds of fruit trees, and poultry. Under the Han dynasty good roads bound the various parts of the empire together, and much labor was invested in irrigation works and other internal improvements. China therefore developed a merchant class, even though her mandarin rulers—scholars drawn largely from the well-to-do landowning class—had no sympathy with traders and taxed them exorbitantly. As trade progressed rapidly in Han times Chinese traders, pushing southward, carried Chinese culture to the newly conquered Kwangtung and even into Indochina and Siam.

*The Silk
Route*

The Han emperors also established commercial relations with India and Europe. Shortly after 140 B.C. a certain Chang Ch'ien was sent west on a diplomatic mission to Bactria and Sogdiana (now Afghanistan), but in Turkestan he was captured by the Huns and held prisoner for ten years. After escaping, returning to China, and becoming an important minister of state, he negotiated treaties of alliance against the Huns with various peoples of central Asia, and Chinese military power was established over the oases as far west as the Pamirs—the present western edge of China. Chang thus opened up

the "Silk Route" (see map, page 400). Caravans could then proceed westward, skirting the deserts of western China, and eventually reach Khotan and Kashgar, high on the "roof of the world." Here the Chinese traded with other Mongol merchants traveling from Bactria and northwestern India, who in turn carried the silk and other commodities to India or else through Kokand, Samarkand, and Bokhara to Merv. From here other traders took them to Seleucia on the Tigris and eventually to the Mediterranean. Though long and difficult, this route was highly profitable because of the prices that Europeans were willing to pay for silk, and it was regularly plied by caravans until modern times. In early Han times, too, water routes were opened to connect China with India, with ships sailing from Kwangtung around Indochina and Malaya, but this trade was largely in the hands of Indians, for the Chinese have rarely shown great skill as sailors.

One consequence of China's expanded field of interest was the introduction of Buddhism into the country. At about the time of Christ, the new religion was brought to China from central Asia, which had then become largely Buddhist, and a century later missionaries and monks arrived directly from India. At first their success was not great, but during the troubled time following the fall of the Han dynasty, when everything seemed to be going to rack and ruin, and when people everywhere were deeply disturbed, Mahayana Buddhism and its savior cult provided many Chinese converts with consolations which neither the highly intellectualized Confucianist philosophy nor the superstitious Taoist religion could equal. Hundreds of Chinese monasteries were filled with monks, hundreds of Sanskrit books were translated into Chinese, and pious pilgrims made the long journey to India to collect manuscripts and to study Buddhism in its native land. Several Chinese kings professed themselves followers of the Buddha, and for a moment it seemed that all China might become Buddhist. But when more settled conditions returned under the T'ang dynasty, Confucianism and Taoism rallied, and the triumphant progress of Buddhism ceased. The religion was not stamped out, however, and in the early twentieth century millions of Chinese called themselves Buddhists. We shall see, moreover, that Buddhism exerted a deep and lasting influence upon the intellectual and artistic life of all China.

In the early years of the seventh century Nestorian Christians (see page 329) appeared in China, and in 638 they were granted permission to preach their religion throughout the empire. They made few

**Buddhism
in China**

**Nestorian
Christianity
and Islam**



HERON, SUNG DYNASTY



POET, YUAN DYNASTY

converts in China, however, and the sect presently died out. Islam met with greater success. Moslems reached China within a few years of the death of the Prophet (A.D. 632), but not much progress was made until after 751. In that year Arab armies won an important victory in Turkestan, after which central Asia quickly turned to Islam. From here the religion seeped into China itself, and while its successes never equaled those of Buddhism, it put Chinese scholars in contact with much Moslem learning. A few Chinese still accept the religion of Mohammed.

**Scholar-
ship**

The T'ang and Sung dynasties saw the climax of China's scholarly, literary, and artistic development. A profusion of histories had appeared under the Han dynasty, and in later times voluminous works recounted China's dynastic history, her local history, and the biographies of countless individuals. Important books on geography were written, rather good maps were drawn, and travelers often told of their experiences—as when Fa Hsien and Hsüan Tsang described their visits to India (399–414 and 629–645 respectively). The introduction of Buddhism, followed by the revival of Confucianism and Taoism, led to much writing on religious and philosophical matters, with the “Neo-Confucianist” school of philosophy dating from Sung times. The founder of this school, Chu Hsi (1130–1200), by reinterpreting the ancient classics under the stimulus of Buddhist and Taoist thought, produced a philosophical system that remained authoritative for several centuries.

**Literature
and art**

T'ang and Sung times were equally active in the production of literature, and especially of poetry and novels. One volume of the Five Classics (the *Shih Ching*) contained about three hundred ancient poems, but the art of poetry reached its perfection only in T'ang times. Chinese poets then composed poems of almost every sort—songs, ballads, love poems, philosophical poems, religious poems, and poems describing the beauties of nature. Modern scholars often attribute new features appearing in the poetry of this period to Buddhist influence. The Chinese had entertained each other with adventure and love stories from ancient times, but as these stories were told in the popular dialects, scholars were reluctant to recognize them as literature. This situation changed under the Sung emperors, and novels dealing with historical or contemporary scenes began to win recognition. These same years also saw the birth of the Chinese theater, which later developed an extensive literature. And finally, the T'ang and Sung periods saw the finest flowering of Chinese art, in

architecture, in porcelain, and above all in painting. In this field, too, Chinese traditions were broadened and deepened by contact with Buddhist art.

One other field of Chinese activity must be mentioned because of its world-wide importance. This field is technology, in which China has contributed many important inventions to Europe and the world. In some cases the Europeans learned directly or indirectly from the Chinese, but in others the techniques were reinvented in Europe many centuries after their first appearance in China. Thus the water wheel and the wheelbarrow were used in China in the first century before Christ; the former was known to Europe—apparently invented independently in Asia Minor—at about the same time, but the latter did not appear in the west until about A.D. 1000. Paper, invented in China about A.D. 100, was brought to Europe by the Arabs almost a thousand years later. The first known example of printing in China is dated about A.D. 770, and large editions of the classics were printed in the ninth and tenth centuries; printing did not appear in Europe until after 1450. The Chinese began using paper money about 970. They invented gunpowder about 920, some five centuries before it was known to Europe, and they used the magnetic needle as early as 1086, three or four centuries before Europeans learned of it. In recent years it has been shown that the remarkable progress of the Chinese in mathematics, medicine, and natural science was accelerated by acquaintance with Sanskrit and Arabic works, but that in the Sung period the Chinese led the world in these fields of study.

Technology

JAPAN

The four major islands of the Japanese archipelago cover an area of about 147,000 square miles (almost exactly that of Montana, or slightly less than that of Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa combined) but they are so mountainous that less than a quarter of this area can be cultivated. The good land is very fertile, however, and susceptible of intensive cultivation, while the Japanese Current in the Pacific provides the islands with a pleasant climate. Nevertheless civilization arose slowly in Japan. The earliest inhabitants of whom traces still remain were the ancestors of the Ainu, a non-Mongoloid race now found only in the northernmost island. The present-day Japanese, on the other hand, are Mongoloids, but more closely related to the nomads of the Siberian steppes, or to the Manchurians and Koreans,

Geography and peoples

than they are to the Chinese. Entering Japan from Korea in the first century after Christ, they soon expelled or absorbed the earlier inhabitants and have since received little racial admixture.

**Clans and
leaders**

At first Japan was divided among many clans of invaders, but after a century or two the Yamato clan, whose lands lay in the central part of the main island (Honshu), assumed a vague suzerainty over all the others. From the fourth century until 562 its power even reached southern Korea. The chief of the Yamato clan was a priest of the Sun Goddess, and when the political power of the clan increased, this worship became a major feature of Japan's national religion. Eventually mythologists declared the Yamato chief to be a descendant of the goddess and himself a god, thus uniting religion and government. The present emperor of Japan is a direct descendant of these Yamato priest-chiefs, and the fiction of his divinity was maintained until the close of World War II.

**The coming
of Chinese
civilization**

The Japanese invaders of the first century, coming from Korea, knew little of the Chinese culture of the Hwang Ho Valley, but they had a bronze and iron culture of their own. Higher civilization was first brought to Japan in the sixth century by Buddhist missionaries from Korea. Chinese influence became especially strong under the T'ang dynasty (618-907), partly because of Buddhist missionaries, but largely because many young Japanese visited China to study the new religion. Nevertheless we must avoid the popular superstition which declares that the Japanese people are mere imitators. They were greatly stimulated by Chinese culture in the seventh and eighth centuries, just as they have been stimulated by European civilization in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but in each case they adapted the new culture to their own needs and they made their own contributions to it. When T'ang culture began to decline, late in the ninth century, the Japanese were already far advanced in creating a distinctive civilization of their own.

**Imperial
govern-
ment**

When young Japanese began returning from China, with their eyes dazzled by the brilliance of the T'ang court, they soon wished to remake their own country along similar lines. Although older and more conservative Japanese protested, the young men effected reforms (645) which put their faction firmly in power, and they made Japan into an imperial country. Instead of being a mere priest-chief, as formerly, the head of the Yamato clan became an emperor who, like his Chinese counterpart, claimed absolute power from Heaven. A new capital was built at Nara (710) in imitation of the T'ang capital



BUDDHIST TEMPLE AT KYOTO. (*Galloway*)

at Ch'ang-an, but later another, much more beautiful city was founded at Kyoto (798). The residence of the emperor remained at Kyoto until 1868, when it was transferred to Tokyo after a somewhat similar cultural revolution. The Yamato emperors created a great bureaucracy, modeled on that of China, which functioned as a central government, but the leaders of other clans were still too powerful to permit imperial interference in strictly local affairs.

At first the emperors of the Yamato clan actually ruled, but presently they became little more than figureheads, performing the public ceremonies of office at Kyoto, but leaving important decisions and the details of government to stronger men who remained behind the scenes. For three full centuries (858-1156) the powerful Fujiwara family thus dominated the government. An early member of this family had participated in the reforms of 645, and under their rule

***Fujiwara
and the
shoguns***

Japanese civilization achieved its first brilliant expression. This culture centered around the court at Kyoto, but at the same time good government brought strength to the provinces, where Chinese influence was much less powerful. Provincial leaders were therefore able to overthrow the Fujiwara in 1156, and after a few years of confusion a certain Yoritomo, of the Minamoto family, achieved power (1185). He allowed the emperors and even the Fujiwara to go through the motions of ruling, but he held power and he made the decisions. He had himself appointed *Shogun* ("Generalissimo") and his family dominated Japan until 1338. Two other lines of shoguns held office in turn (the Ashikaga, 1338-1568, and the Tokugawa, 1603-1867), but at last the emperor again secured effective power (1867). During much of this period of rule by warrior aristocrats, and especially under the Ashikaga, Japan was always on the verge of breaking into tiny principalities under local lords ("daimyos") and their armed retainers ("samurai").

**Japanese
Buddhism**

The earliest Japanese religion was a form of nature worship, sometimes called Shintoism ("the Way of the Gods"). Scholars often note likenesses between this religion and the primitive shamanism of certain nomadic Siberian tribes, and its traces may still be seen in the popular religion of Japan. Chinese Buddhism, on the other hand, was a highly intellectualized religion, appealing especially to the educated upper class, and its early successes were doubtless due to its being accepted as a part of superior Chinese culture. In time, however, Japanese Buddhism split into various sects adapted to the needs of persons on different intellectual, social, and religious levels. Thus the Jodo, or "Pure Land" (i.e., "Paradise"), sect had a wide popular appeal because its leaders had transformed the Buddhist Nirvana into a sort of Heaven, which they promised to all those professing faith and performing routine "good works." It was a "salvation cult." The Zen sect, on the other hand, appealed to the warrior and aristocratic classes by teaching a rigorous self-discipline. Other sects appealed to other sorts of people. Even in the eighth century the emperors were much impressed by Buddhism, to which they gave their support, and under the shoguns it became the established religion of the country, with the great majority of the Japanese people professing it in one form or another. The most active Buddhists in the world today are Japanese.

**Japanese
writing**

The Japanese were still illiterate when Chinese influence was first felt, and when they began to write they not only used Chinese char-

acters but even wrote books and poems in the Chinese language. As the Chinese characters could not adequately record the Japanese language, a few were selected to represent certain sounds—usually one syllable—but thousands of others were used for individual words. It is said that a modern newspaper must stock about ten thousand different characters in its print shop. The Japanese also took over countless words from the Chinese, especially words used in scholarly, philosophical, and scientific discussions. In these early days, Japanese literature was deeply influenced by Chinese models, but Japanese poets and storytellers were already developing their own standards. The most famous of Japanese novels, *The Tale of Genji*, by Lady Murasaki, dates from the early eleventh century. Japanese artists were equally indebted to the Chinese, and like the Chinese they found their principal inspiration in Buddhism.

This great flowering of early Japanese civilization came in the three centuries of the Fujiwara period (858–1156). Japan was then a highly civilized country and, then as later, its civilization showed a high degree of polish, laying great emphasis upon subtlety and refinement, politeness, formality, and etiquette. An English writer on the history of manners has recently observed that, at a period when an English earl did not always remember to wipe the mutton grease from his beard after eating, a Japanese lad of eighteen might be wondering whether the gift of a rose blossom or of a half-open bud would better express his feeling for his ladylove.

*Refinement
and
etiquette*

THE MONGOLS AND AFTER

To the north and west of China, but separated from it by mountains or deserts, stretch the great steppes of central Asia. Though unsuitable for agriculture, these treeless and semiarid plains provide excellent pasture for sheep, camels, and horses, and from early times they have been inhabited by various Mongoloid peoples—Huns, Turks, and Mongols. Whenever these nomads became too numerous for the scanty subsistence offered by the steppes, they raided the territories of their wealthier and more civilized neighbors. China has perhaps suffered the most from such inroads, especially at times when she had no strong central government, but on earlier pages we have seen how the Huns devastated northern India, Persia, and Europe as far as Italy and central France. A few centuries later the Avars and Magyars invaded central Europe, and still later the Turks overran the Near East.

*Raiders
from the
steppes*

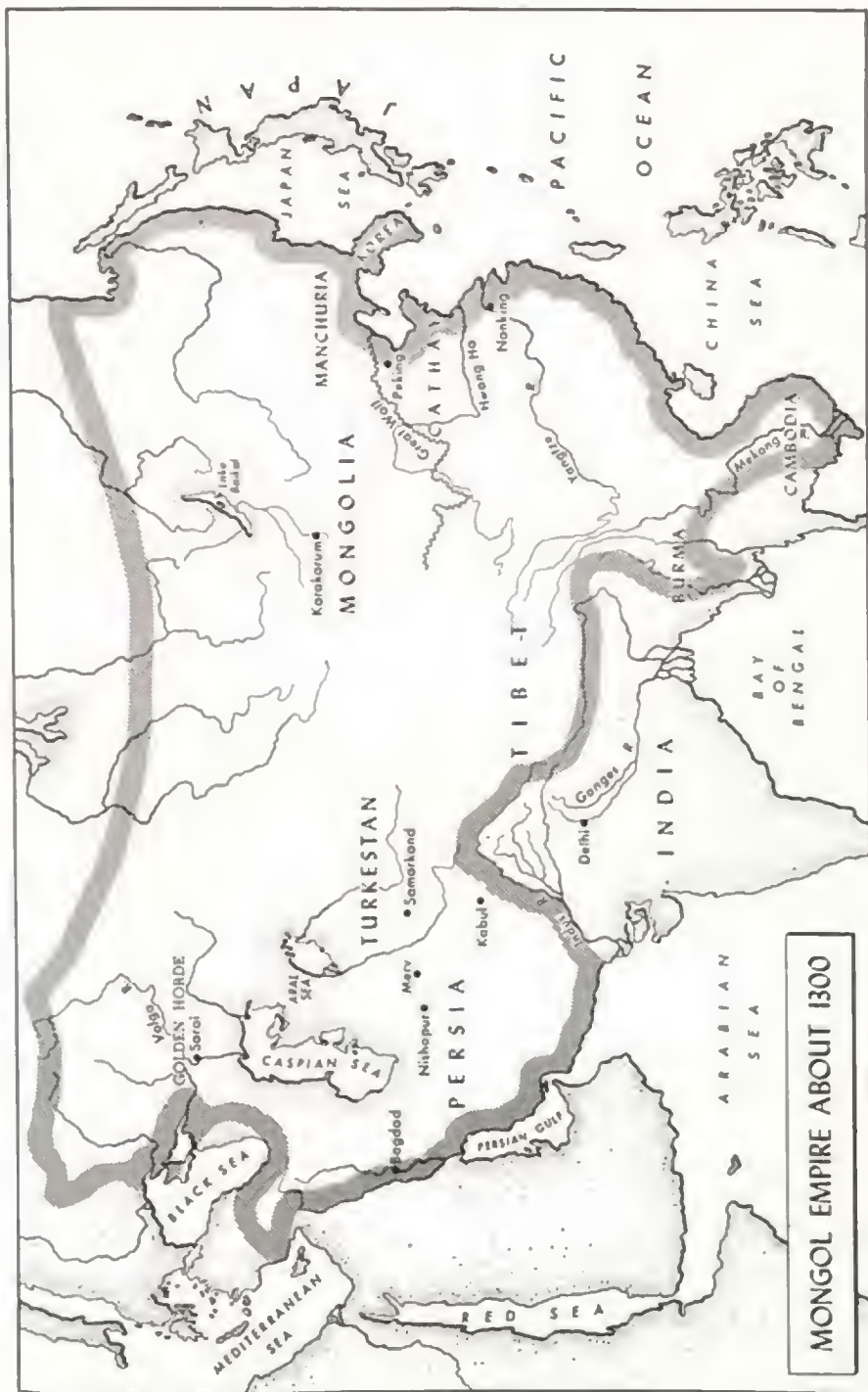
The most far-reaching and the most destructive of all these raiders, however, was the Mongol Genghis Khan.

**Genghis
Khan**

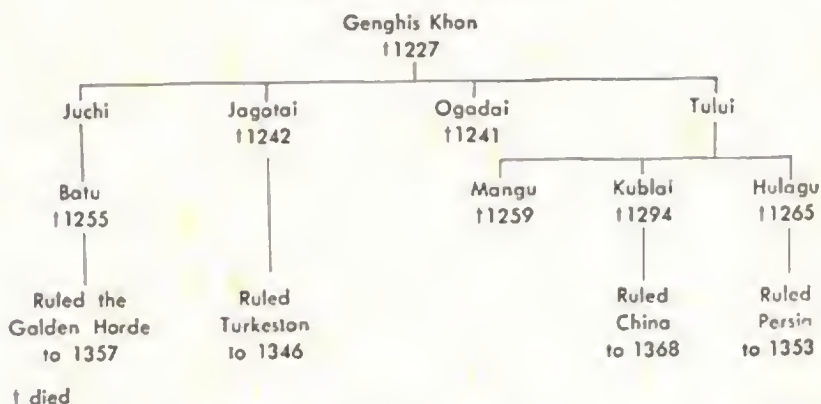
Genghis Khan (1167–1227) was born in the region now known as Outer Mongolia, north of the Gobi Desert and not far from the Siberian frontier and Lake Baikal. His father, a local chieftain (khan), died a few years later, and only by constant struggle did his young son retain his position. As he approached the age of forty, however, he felt himself strong enough to assume the title by which he has ever since been known. Setting aside his given name, Temujin, he began calling himself Genghis Khan ("Lord of All Men"). By 1212 he had set up his capital at Karakorum and established his authority over all the tribes of Mongolia. A year later he invaded China, whose northern part (then known as "Cathay") was soon in his hands, and Manchuria and Korea were occupied by his generals. The Sung emperors retained the southern provinces of China, however, and others ruled in the west. Genghis next turned his attention to Turkestan, and after overrunning Persia and looting northern India (1219–1223), he returned to Mongolia. Five years later he died during a campaign in western China. A commander of genius, Genghis Khan conquered an enormous empire with a fairly small army of horsemen—at most, 150,000 men—but his atrocious cruelty sent shudders through the whole continent. His sons and grandsons inherited an empire stretching across all Asia, to which they added Russia (1237–1241), where the "Golden Horde" ruled for upward of two hundred years (see page 341).

**Kublai
Khan**

The famous Kublai Khan (1216–1294) was the most important of Genghis's grandsons and the head of the family. Turning his attention to China, he established his capital at Peking, overthrew the last Sung emperor (1279), and extended his power over Indochina as far as Cambodia and Burma; but his two efforts to conquer Japan (1274 and 1281) ended in failure. In his last years the "Great Khan" ruled an empire that reached from Korea and the China Sea to Hungary and from the Siberian wastes to the Persian Gulf. Kublai laid aside the bloody customs of his fathers, absorbed much Chinese culture, and allowed the old mandarin bureaucracy to do most of the governing. Chinese artists and craftsmen made Peking one of the world's most beautiful cities, and the peace which Kublai maintained throughout his vast empire promoted extensive trade. In his day the Silk Route was busier than ever. The descendants of Kublai Khan ruled China as the Yüan dynasty until 1368. The family of Genghis Khan had long since lost its solidarity, however, for Kublai and his successors in



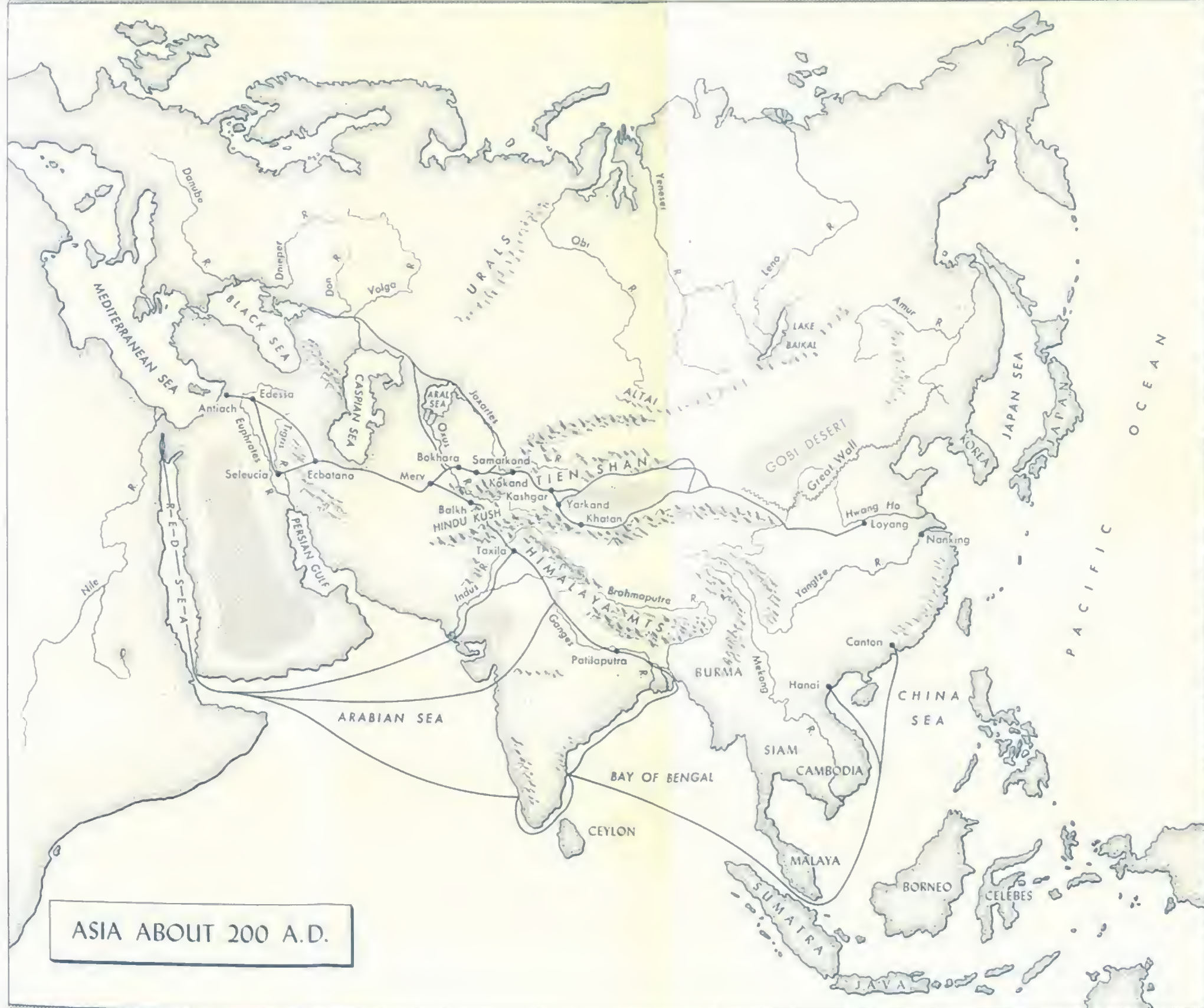
THE MONGOL DYNASTY



China became Buddhists while the rulers of the Golden Horde, Turkestan, and Persia were fanatical Moslems.

**Europeans
in Asia**

The Mongols carried death and destruction wherever they went, but having once established themselves as rulers they sometimes governed rather well. China was prosperous under Kublai Khan, as was India under Akbar, and the accompanying commercial activity had far-reaching consequences. It was under Kublai that Europeans first reached China by accompanying caravans along the Silk Route. The most famous of these visitors was the Venetian Marco Polo (see page 629), who spent almost twenty years (1275-1292) in China at the court of Kublai Khan and returned home by way of Sumatra and India. His fascinating book about his travels was read and enjoyed by countless persons throughout Europe—by the young Christopher Columbus, among others. Then, in the days of Baber, the Portuguese first reached India, and the first English arrived under Akbar. European power thus touched Asia, and a new period in the history of each continent began.



ASIA ABOUT 200 A.D.

IX

Carcassonne (Ewing Galloway)



FEUDALISM AND THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

REBUILDING EUROPE—THE FEUDAL SYSTEM—
THE STATES OF EUROPE

Western Europe		Byzantium	Orient	
410	Alaric sacks Rome		320–647	Guptas in India: Golden Age
d. 453	Attila the Hun			
d. 476	Romulus Augustulus, last Roman Emperor in West			
481–	Clavis, King of the			
511	Franks			
496	His conversion to Christianity	527– Justinian		
568	Lombards invade Italy	565	618–	T'ang dynasty in China
590–	Pope Gregory I	600–	908	
608		650	622	Hegira of Mahammed
714–	Charles Martel, Mayor	717–	711	Moslems invade Spain
741	of the Palace	820		
732	Battle of Tours	(iconoclasts)		
751–	Pepin, King of the			
768	Franks			
751	Lombards take Ravenna			
754	"Donation of Con- stantine" forged		756	Ommiads in Spain
756	Donation of Pepin			
768–	Charlemagne			
814				
774	Lombard kingdom destroyed			
800	Charlemagne Roman Emperor	797– Irene empress	786–	Harun al-Rashid
843	Division of Charle- magne's empire	802	809	
800–	Danes invade England		813–	al-Mamun caliph
1000			833	
860	Norsemen in Iceland	860		
896	Magyars invade Hungary			
871–	Alfred the Great in			
899	England			
911	Normans in France	900– Bulgarian Empire	912–	Abd er-Rohman in
		1018	961	Spain: Golden Age
962	Otto, Holy Roman Emperor		960–	Sung dynasty in China:
987	Hugh Capet king in France	990	1279	Golden Age
1024–	Salian emperors			
1125				
1073–	Pope Gregory VII	1054		
1085				
1077	Henry IV at Canossa			
1066	Norman conquest of England	1071		
1084	Robert Guiscard sacks Rome			
1096–	First Crusade		1085	Christians regain Toledo
1099				

24. REBUILDING EUROPE

DURING the "six centuries of Asia" (A.D. 400-1000) Moslems created a brilliant civilization in the Near East (600-1000), the Macedonian emperors ruled a flourishing Byzantium (867-1057), the Guptas (320-647) presided over an India that was prosperous and highly civilized, the Tang dynasty (618-907) brought China's golden age, which was followed by the splendid Sung period (960-1279), and the Great Reform of 645 prepared the way for the fascinating Fujiwara period in Japanese history (858-1156). Each of these countries was then prosperous economically, and each was famous for its achievements in literature and art, science and philosophy. But during these same centuries Europe was very backward, still suffering grievously from the disasters that had accompanied the decline of the Roman Empire. Except for the brief "Carolingian renaissance" about 800, the lights of civilization and learning burned low in Europe between 500 and 1000, and these centuries are not inappropriately called "the Dark Ages."

**Europe's
Dark Ages**

Not much is known of the history of the various barbarian states that arose in western Europe during the troubled fifth century. When the great migrations were finally over, somewhat before the year 500, Visigothic leaders ruled Spain and southwestern France, Burgundians had taken over western Switzerland and southeastern France, and the Ostrogoths held most of Italy. From their early home on the lower Rhine the Franks had spread their power over Belgium and northern France, and the Angles and Saxons had invaded Britain from northwestern Germany. The peoples of western Europe then faced the dreary task of repairing the damage that had been done and of erecting a new civilization upon the ruins of the old. Time and time again during the ensuing Dark Ages they were interrupted by re-

**Western
Europe
rebuilt**

newed invasions of barbarians, but after the tenth century these disturbances became less frequent and less disastrous. Europe then settled down to the creation of a civilization that received its finest expression in the thirteenth century. This civilization is usually characterized as "medieval," and the years between 1100 and 1400 constitute the high point of the "Middle Ages"—the thousand years between Constantine and the beginning of modern times.

**What the
Dark Ages
started with**

Medieval Europe drew upon three separate cultural traditions, which it finally blended into one. In the first place, this new civilization arose in lands that had been deeply influenced by late Roman civilization and it inherited much from ancient Rome, Greece, and even from the ancient Orient. Secondly, the German invaders brought with them many ideas and institutions dating from their days in the German forests. And thirdly, the makers of the Middle Ages took over the Christian religion, adapting it to their needs and understanding and often taking it as a guide in their thinking on secular matters. We must therefore summarize the legacy of each of these three cultures upon which medieval civilization rested.

**Rome's
decline**

Enough has been said in an earlier chapter about the decline of Roman civilization after the troubled third century. This decline was clearly visible in the fourth century, not only in outlying provinces such as Britain, Gaul, and Spain, but even in Italy itself. In the fifth century, the authority of Rome's central government collapsed, with power falling to local leaders or barbarian invaders. Trade fell off catastrophically, coined money became scarce, and for several centuries western Europe depended largely upon barter for the exchange of commodities. There was also a great decline in the population of Europe. We have no exact figures, but we can safely assert that in 600 there were far fewer people in the West than at any earlier time for a thousand years.

**Reversion to
agriculture**

Western Europe relapsed into a rural economy. Much of the land reverted to forest, and not until these forests had been cleared anew could it be restored to cultivation. The cultivated land, on the other hand, was divided into great estates (called villas) and was worked by serfs under the supervision of a lord, who provided protection and other services in exchange for a lion's share of the crops. Meantime cities had almost completely disappeared. Enough inhabitants remained in some ancient centers to preserve a formal continuity, but these few remaining towns were mere shadows of their former selves, sheltering only a scanty population in their crumbling ruins. At the

end of the sixth century, few western European towns could boast a population of five thousand persons. As the higher culture of antiquity had been a city culture, this disappearance of urban life was a calamity for civilization.

Nevertheless the Roman cultural tradition persisted in western Europe, and even came to dominate the German invaders. It was almost as strong in Gaul and Spain as in Italy itself; it was weaker in Britain and the Roman provinces of southern Germany and Austria; but nowhere was it eradicated. The persistence of Rome's cultural dominance is shown in many ways, one of the most obvious of which was the continued use of Latin. Throughout the Middle Ages the whole Western world used Latin as the language of religion, law, diplomacy, science, and scholarship, and in all these fields Roman ideas continued to prevail. Frenchmen, Spaniards, and Italians today speak languages descended from Latin—the so-called "Romanee languages"—thus showing their cultural dependence upon Rome, and while Englishmen and Germans speak Germanic tongues, they too have inherited countless Roman institutions and Roman ideas.

*Persistence
of Roman
culture*

The Germans

The Germans, like several other peoples whom we have already met, were descended from the neolithic villagers who inhabited the upper valleys of the Rhine and Danube in the third millennium before Christ. Racially they were a mixture of Alpine peasants with Nordic warriors (see page 18). We have seen, too, how some of these central European peoples migrated southward during the second millennium, with Hittites entering Asia Minor, Achaeans and Dorians entering Greece, and still others settling in Italy. At approximately the same time other groups, known as Celts or Gauls, migrated westward into France, Belgium, and the British Isles. Shortly before 1000 B.C. the tribes that eventually became Germanic migrated northward to settle in Scandinavia or along the Baltic and North Sea coasts of Germany.

*Germanic
origins*

Several centuries later, some of these Germans moved south once more, conquering or driving out the Celtic peoples who had lingered in the old homeland. Between 500 and 200 B.C. a second group of Celts therefore spread over much of Europe, occupying France, northern Italy, and England (but not Wales or Ireland), and even reaching such remote places as the Galicia in northwestern Spain, the Galicia in southern Poland, and Galatia in central Asia Minor. Before 100 B.C.

*German
conquest of
Germany*

the Germans had established themselves in the region lying between the Rhine and the Elbe rivers and reaching to the Alps on the south. Caesar came in contact with them during his campaigns in Gaul (58-50 B.C.), and for a moment Augustus thought of adding the whole region to the Roman Empire. A severe defeat in A.D. 9 convinced him that such a project was impracticable, however, and though two Roman emperors, Domitian and Trajan, occupied parts of southern Germany and Rumania, the Rhine-Danube frontier usually stood firm thereafter.

**Germans
before the
migrations**

What little we know of the Germans at the period before the great migrations comes largely from a few paragraphs written by Julius Caesar about 50 B.C. and a pamphlet by the historian Tacitus dating from A.D. 98. Caesar pictured the Germans as nomads concerned principally with their cattle and their wars, but Tacitus indicates that by his time they had adopted agriculture and settled down to village life. He admits that in time of peace they were lazy and much given to quarreling, gambling, and drunkenness, but he pictures their military prowess in glowing colors.

**Early
Germanic
institutions**

Tacitus's description of the German military organization known as the *comitatus* has often attracted the attention of historians. He tells us that a chieftain would organize a group of young men to fight under his leadership and share his renown and booty; these young men were supported at the leader's expense, and they bound themselves to him by strong oaths of loyalty. Elsewhere Tacitus speaks eloquently of the German love of freedom and briefly describes the political institutions of the German village, in which all free men shared power with their chiefs. He also speaks of larger political units called tribes. These tribes seem to have been rather transitory organizations, however, for those whom he mentions do not appear again in later writers, and the various peoples who invaded the Roman Empire in the fifth century bore other tribal names. These early Germans had legends and poems, of course, but they could neither read nor write. Their religion was quite primitive, and what little we know of their mythology, centering around gods such as Woden and Thor, comes largely from Norse epics of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

**Germans in
the Roman
Empire**

The first Germans to enter the Roman Empire came as slaves, who were brought to Italy in considerable numbers during the first century before and after Christ. In the third and fourth centuries many Germans entered the Empire as mercenary soldiers, while others came

as peaceful settlers, either individually or in families or in larger groups, much as immigrants entered the United States in the nineteenth century. Emperors often encouraged such immigration by giving the settlers land to cultivate. These isolated immigrants quickly absorbed a considerable amount of Roman culture from their neighbors. The great migrations of the fifth century merely continued on a larger scale and with greater violence what had been happening regularly for more than a hundred years. The Germanic invaders never made up a majority of the population in any large district, and almost everywhere they went they found Romanized kinsmen who had preceded them. It is a grave mistake, therefore, to think of the invaders of the fifth century as overthrowing a mighty empire and establishing their own barbarian kingdoms in its place. The Roman Empire had long since been undermined, and the Germans merely seeped into the hollow places.

It is also important to bear in mind that the Germans entering the Empire usually came with a high respect for Roman prestige, Roman culture, and Roman institutions. They hoped to better their lot by acquiring some of these blessings for themselves. They may have indulged in a deplorable amount of looting, but in general they came to learn rather than to destroy. Thus a Christian historian (Orosius), writing shortly after 415, quotes Ataulf, brother-in-law and successor to the Alaric who sacked Rome in 410, as saying, "I once ardently desired to wipe out the very name of Rome and to change the Roman into a Gothic Empire, but when long experience taught me that the wild barbarism of the Goths was incompatible with laws, and that without laws there is no state, I decided instead to seek the glory of restoring and augmenting the Roman name with Gothic strength. I hope to be remembered as the restorer of Rome since I cannot replace her." Entering the Empire in this spirit, the various Germanic invaders set themselves with zeal to learning what they could from Rome. They still preserved much of their barbaric strength and ignorance, and they retained some of their ancestral institutions, but in general they fitted themselves into patterns provided by the late Roman Empire.

**Respect
for Roman
culture**

The Church in the Sixth Century

The third great element which went to make up the new civilization of the Middle Ages was Christianity. A later chapter will be

devoted to describing various aspects of the medieval church as a religious institution, but a few words must be said here regarding its activities as a political and civilizing institution.

**Bishops as
statesmen**

We have already seen that from early times the Christians formed a closely knit community directed by their priests and bishops, a Christian empire within the Roman Empire. Before the fifth century this ecclesiastical empire had spread to all the Roman provinces, and on the eve of the barbarian invasions its bishops were everywhere persons of importance. When the power and authority of the imperial officials declined, that of the bishops usually increased, partly because they were the only persons in the community able to do the things that had to be done. The churches were by this time wealthy organizations, owning great estates and other valuable properties given by pious persons, and the bishops were nearly always men of wide experience in administration. In the troubled fifth and sixth centuries, therefore, they took over many of the functions of government, and they were a powerful force working for law and order in the chaotic days of the barbarian invasions. They later showed great reluctance to surrender to others the powers thus acquired, and throughout the Middle Ages there was a standing quarrel between the officials of the church and those of the state as to the exact powers of each. The church became so powerful a political institution that the history of the Middle Ages cannot be written without constant reference to it as such.

**Civilizing
force of
Catholicism**

The church also did much to civilize the barbarians. Most of the German invaders of the West were nominally Christians, having been converted in the fourth century by Ulfilas, an Arian missionary from Constantinople. Since the older inhabitants of the invaded regions were orthodox Christians, Arianism soon came to be regarded in the West as a symbol of barbarism, and when the invaders wished to appear more civilized, they found it helpful to transfer their allegiance to the Catholic faith. Other Germanic peoples were converted directly from paganism to Catholicism, notably the Franks about 500 and the Anglo-Saxons a hundred years later.

**Martial
missionaries
and monks**

During the next few centuries these recently converted Germans—especially the Franks and the Anglo-Saxons—actively propagated Christianity and civilization among their pagan neighbors. Conquered peoples often were granted a simple option between the gallows and the font. Unfortunately there were cases in which the persons thus forcibly baptized did not at once become shining examples of Chris-

tian piety, even after the waters of baptism had been fortified with enforced attendance at a sermon or two. In fact, one writer of the time tells of certain defeated barbarians who accepted the Christian faith as the sole alternative to slaughter but were found next day splashing around in the river, trying to wash off the humiliating stains of baptism! These martial missionaries presently gave way to priests and monks, however, and after a few generations the descendants of the most reluctant converts began to show evidence of the benign and civilizing influence of their new religion. On the other hand, barbarian kings and peoples often accepted Christianity gladly, even sending to ask for missionaries, not because they were convinced of the truth of Christian doctrine, or even because they cared about such things, but because baptism brought them an easy entrance into the civilized world of their day.

THE FRANKS

Among the various Germanic peoples who invaded Roman territory during the fifth century, the most important were the Franks, from whom modern France derives her name. These Franks had formerly been a confederation of tribes living in west central Germany, along the middle Rhine. Many crossed the river early in the fifth century, but others remained in the old homeland, which presently came to be called Franconia and the principal city of which today is Frankfurt. The emigrating Franks fell into two groups, the Ripuarians, who occupied the region between the lower Rhine and Belgium, and the Salians, who took over Belgium and northeastern France. In the fifth century one of the Salian tribes was ruled by a line of kings called the Merovingians because they claimed descent from a semimythical ancestor, Merovech. The most important king of this line was Clovis (481-511).

**Frankish
origins**

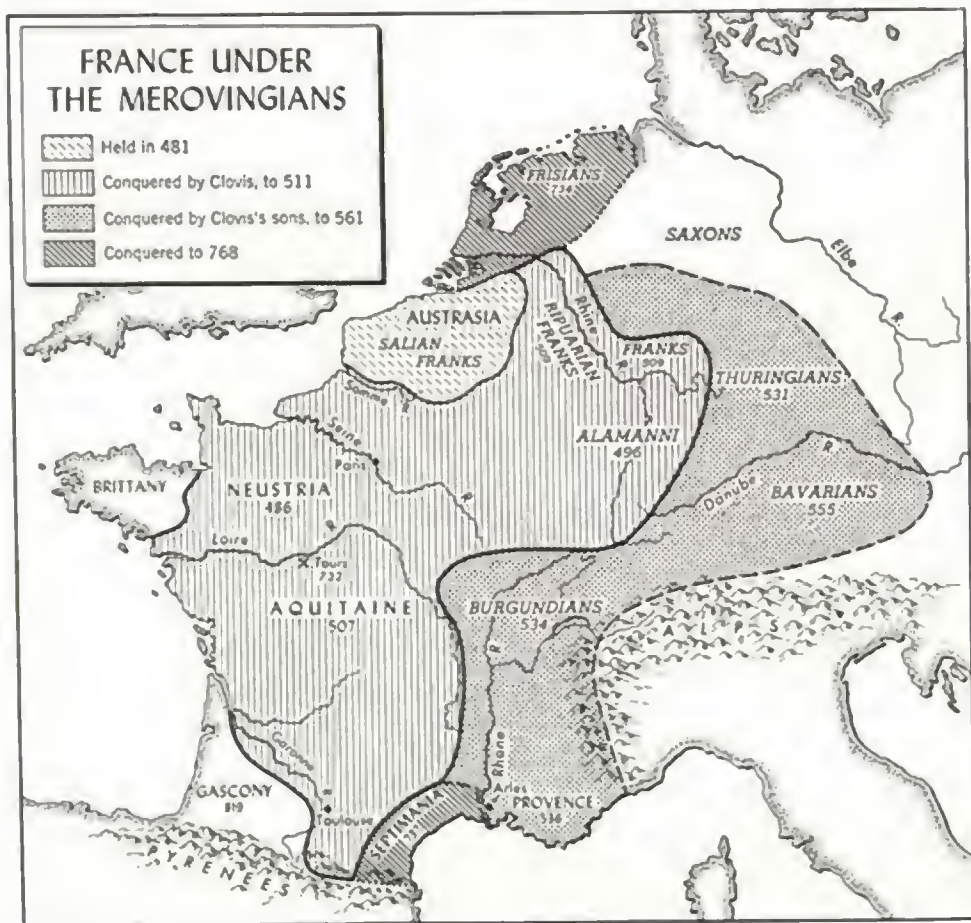
Though only fifteen years of age when he came to the throne, Clovis soon began planning great things, and five years later he won his first victory. In the days when the imperial power was rapidly disintegrating, a Roman general had carved out an empire for himself in the part of France that lies between the Somme and the Loire rivers. Clovis defeated and killed this general in 486, after which he added the whole of northern France to his realm and established his principal residence at Paris. Clovis next attacked the Alamanni, a Germanic tribe inhabiting southern Germany east of the Rhine and

Clovis

Alsace on that river's western bank. The Alamanni were defeated (496) but not destroyed, and the conflict between the two peoples continued for several centuries: in fact, if we equate the Franks with the modern French and the Alamanni with the Germans (*Allemands* in French), we might say that the great struggle has persisted to our own day.

**Conquest
of France**

The campaign against the Alamanni was important for another reason as well. Dissatisfied with the meager aid accorded him by his pagan gods, Clovis turned to Christianity and was baptized, along with three thousand of his warriors, after the new god had given him victory. As the ceremony was performed by a Catholic bishop, Clovis thereby became the most eminent Catholic in Gaul and won the support of the native Gauls and Romans (or at least of their clergy),



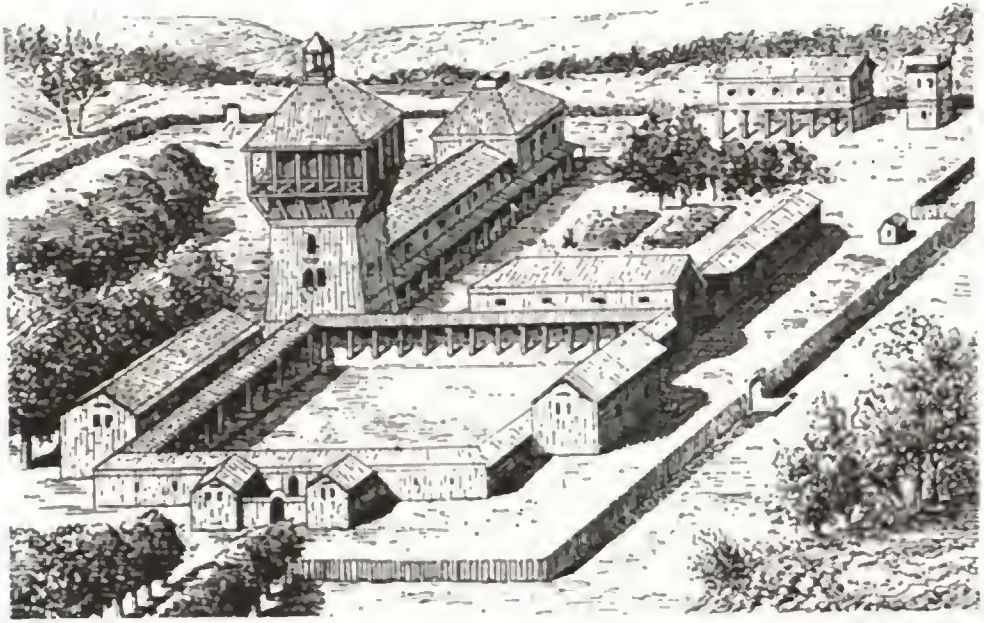
who, being Catholics, cordially detested the religion of their Arian masters, the Burgundians and the Visigoths. In later campaigns Clovis subdued the Ripuarian Franks and even extended his power over the Franks east of the Rhine. In other wars waged against the Burgundians, he was less successful, but in his last years he crowned his career by expelling the Visigoths from western France and thus extending his own territories from the Loire south to the Pyrenees (507). His sons later annexed Burgundy (534), as well as various odds and ends, and thus brought virtually all modern France into Merovingian hands. Other wars extended Frankish power eastward into the Thuringian and Bavarian provinces of central and southern Germany.

Clovis called himself "King of the Franks," and in his day he was the most important man in the West. Neither he nor his successors recognized any overlord in Constantinople, though the emperor may have considered him a subject. With the death of Clovis, the decline of the Merovingian dynasty began, and though his descendants continued to reign for 240 years, no one thereafter enjoyed power equal to his. This decline is sometimes attributed to a Frankish law by which the realm was divided at each succession among all the late king's sons. Clovis's kingdom was therefore split between his four sons, and not until 558, after a generation of fratricidal warfare, did one man again rule all. This man's death three years later entailed a new division, and unity was not restored until 613. The last of the strong Merovingians died in 639, and thereafter the kings of this dynasty led idle existences.

*Merovingian
weakness*

The causes for Merovingian decline were really more deep-seated than this one Frankish law. The principal trouble lay in the fact that roads and communications had broken down throughout France, as everywhere else in the Western world, and the Merovingian kings lacked the means, or perhaps even the imagination, required to reconstruct them. They could effectively rule only those regions where their armies happened to be. They sent "dukes" and "counts" to govern more distant areas, but only a strong king like Clovis could trust the loyalty of the agents upon whom he depended for so much. The local rulers enjoyed a taste of freedom under Clovis's sons and grandsons, and later they acted much as they pleased, virtually reducing Gaul to a large number of independent villas. In the end, however, a series of powerful ministers, known as the "mayors of the palace," managed to pull things together once more and eventually

*Political
decline*



MEROVINGIAN VILLAGE. This reconstruction of a Merovingian village (after sketch by Garnier) shows in the foreground a large court surrounded by living quarters; behind are sheds, barns, and workrooms. The tower and the strong gates are for defense. The whole is surrounded by a strong palisade. Compare this with the relatively unfortified Roman farmhouse shown on page 173, which shows the contrast between the peaceful and well-governed Italy of the second century before Christ and the troubled state of France almost a thousand years later. (Bettmann Archive)

to make themselves kings, first in fact and later in name. The new dynasty was that of the Carolingians.

**Charles
Martel**

The first of the great Carolingian mayors of the palace was Charles Martel (714-741), who owes his cognomen, Martel ("the Hammer") to his victory over the Moslems near Tours (732) which ended their conquests in western Europe (see page 307). The war against these invaders required a greater use of cavalry than ever before in the West, for the Moslems raided and fought from horseback. It was not easy to find adequate supplies of horses and riders, but Charles's efforts were successful. With his new and more mobile army he drove out the African invaders and later restored unity to the old Frankish kingdom. He fought wars in Germany, punished rebellious nobles, and made the Franks a great military power once more. His son Pepin called himself king, and his grandson Charlemagne became emperor. Before discussing these great men, however, we must first examine the state of affairs in contemporary Italy.

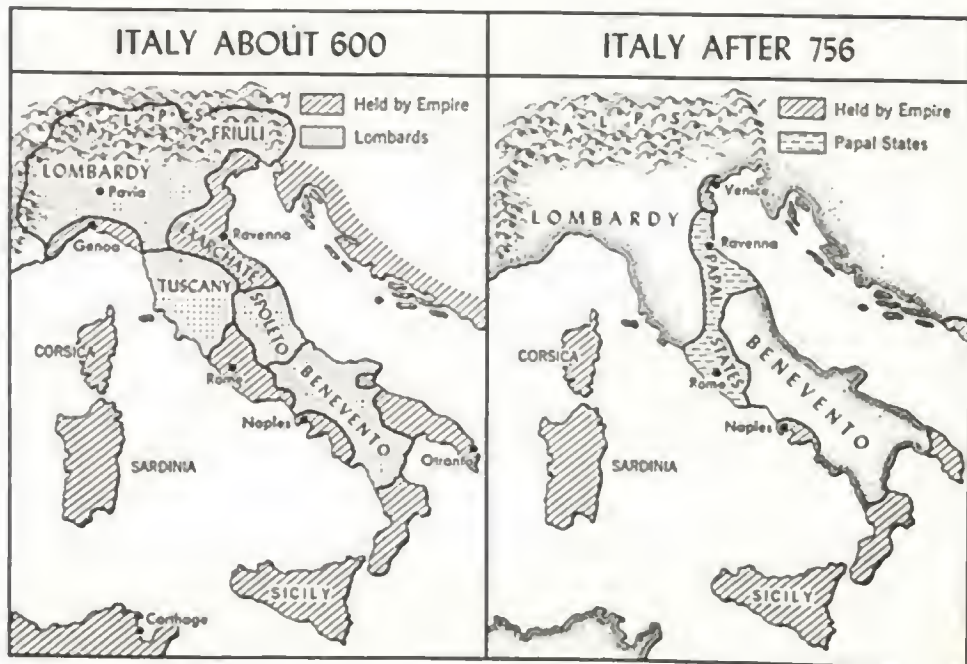
Pepin and the Papacy

During the sixth century, while Clovis's sons were dividing and reuniting his kingdom, the armies of Justinian were reconquering Italy and losing it again to the Lombards. These barbarians, first entering Italy in 568, gradually occupied the major part of the peninsula, which they divided into tiny principalities—much as the successors of Clovis were then dividing France. The imperial forces managed to retain fairly extensive territories around Ravenna (then ruled by an "exarch" and therefore called the "exarchate"), the environs of Rome, a few seaports, and the "heel" and "toe" of Italy. All the rest fell to various Lombard lords.

**Lombards
in Italy**

In the confused years that followed this catastrophe, the most important man in Italy was the bishop of Rome, Gregory I (590–604), the first of the great medieval popes. Born to a family of the Roman aristocracy about 540, Gregory entered the imperial service as a young man, and in 573 he ruled the city as prefect. Then suddenly changing his course of life and giving his property to charity, he entered a monastery, passed several years as the pope's diplomatic agent at

**Pope
Gregory I**



Constantinople (where he failed to secure military or political backing against the barbarians and formed a very low opinion of Greeks and the Eastern Church, but did not learn Greek), served for a time as abbot of a monastery in Rome, and became pope in 590. As pope he skillfully administered the vast wealth of the Roman Church, subjected the Roman clergy to strict discipline, continued his quarrels with the Greeks, engaged in far-flung missionary activities (for example, sending monks to convert England), wrote several popular books, and, above all, became the real ruler of Rome. When the imperial government failed to send forces to check the Lombard advance, Gregory organized the defense of Italy and negotiated with the barbarians, thereby saving Rome from capture. He used much of the church's income for services with which the imperial authorities should have provided the city. In return, he virtually took over the government, naming its magistrates and supervising the administration. As Lombard territory separated Rome from the imperial capital at Ravenna, Gregory and his successors found it easy to preserve the political independence they thus acquired.

**Renewed
Lombard
aggressions**

Conditions in Italy changed little thereafter until the Lombard king, Liutprand (712-744), ruler of Pavia in the part of northern Italy that is still called Lombardy, began uniting all Italy under his rule. He actually secured most of the northern Lombard-held regions, occupied parts of the exarchate (the Byzantine-held territory around Ravenna), and even threatened Rome. Since the pope was at that moment engaged in bitter theological controversy with the iconoclastic emperor at Constantinople, he dared not call upon his nominal overlord for aid. Instead he turned to Charles Martel, but that aging "mayor of the palace" declined to intervene in Italian affairs (739).

**Pepin,
king of
the Franks**

Two years later Charles died and, as though he had been king, his two sons divided his legacy. When the elder brother had retired to a monastery (747), the younger, named Pepin, ruled the whole Frankish kingdom. In 751 he assumed the title of King, after being elected to that office by the Frankish nobility. The last king of the Merovingian line was banished to a monastery, where he died in oblivion.

**Donation
of Pepin**

Meantime Liutprand too had died and Lombard aggressions were resumed when his successor occupied a large part of the exarchate and Ravenna itself (751). These events may help explain the pope's encouragement of Pepin. At any rate, a new pope (Stephen II, 752-757) made a trip to Gaul in 754, where he anointed Pepin King of the

Franks and named him *patricius* of the Romans—a vague title suggesting that its bearer, rather than the emperor at Constantinople, was the rightful protector of Rome. Pepin then invaded Italy twice (754 and 756) and forced the Lombards to cede to the pope Ravenna and the exarchate, as well as a broad strip of territory across central Italy connecting the exarchate with Rome. This grant of territory, known as the Donation of Pepin (756), established the Papal States, which continued to rule Rome and other parts of Italy until 1870.

A curious by-product of these events was the promulgation of a document usually called the "Donation of Constantine." This document purported to be a proclamation by the great Constantine, issued after his conversion to Christianity, announcing that he had given the whole of Italy and the West to Pope Sylvester and his successors forever. Throughout the Middle Ages most people (but not all) accepted this document as genuine, and based far-reaching political theories upon it, but in the fifteenth century it was conclusively shown to be a forgery: today no one defends its authenticity. There can be little doubt that the document was concocted at Rome toward the middle of the eighth century, and as our earliest mention of it comes from the monastery near Paris where Stephen anointed Pepin in 754, many scholars believe that the pope used it during this visit to convince Pepin that the Lombards had really robbed the papacy when they snatched Ravenna from the imperial authorities. In any case, later popes frequently invoked the alleged donation to justify their seizures of territory in Italy. This Donation of Constantine is perhaps the most famous forgery in history.

**"Donation
of Constantine"**

CHARLEMAGNE

When Pepin died, in 768, his heirs followed the old Frankish custom and divided his kingdom between his two sons. Within three years, however, the younger brother was dead and the entire kingdom had passed to Charles, ordinarily called Charles the Great, or Charlemagne (*Carolus magnus* in Latin). Charlemagne was the most important ruler to appear in the West since Roman times. Large and handsome, and of distinguished bearing, he was a man of great force of character and high intelligence. Though he spoke Latin as well as his ancestral Germanic dialect, and could understand Greek, he never learned to read or write. In general his political policies were a continuation of those of his Frankish predecessors, but he appreciated

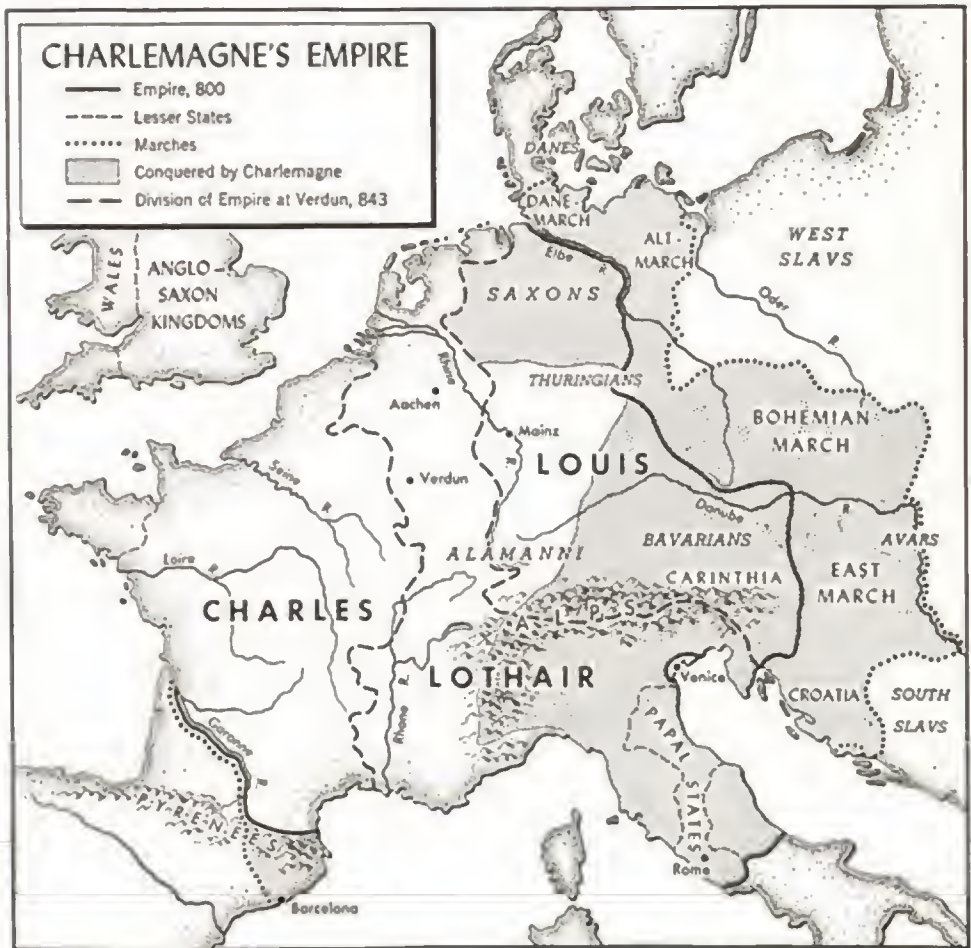
**Charle-
magne**



CHARLEMAGNE'S CHURCH AT AACHEN. This famous octagonal church was built by Charlemagne about 800. Some of the pillars were transported over the Alps from Italy. The chandelier was added later, the gift of the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.

the greatness of Rome better than they, and he tried to make his capital at Aachen into a Roman city, architecturally as well as imperially. In each endeavor, however, he was only partially successful.

The early decades of Charlemagne's long reign (768-814) were filled with wars, by which he rounded out the earlier Frankish conquests. One of his first campaigns took him to Italy, where he completed the destruction of Lombard power and had himself crowned King of the Lombards (774). He occupied all Italy to a line some-



what south of Rome, but though he recognized the Donation of Pepin and the Papal States, he made it clear that he considered himself the supreme ruler even in that district. Other wars were waged in the east against Saxons, Thuringians, and Bavarians, until all the Germanic tribes had been brought under his rule and forcibly Christianized. When his conquests extended east of the Elbe, he established frontier provinces, called "marches," beyond that river to protect his subjects from their non-Germanic neighbors: the Dane march against the Scandinavians, the Alt march and Bohemia against the Slavs, the East march (now Austria) against the Avars of Hungary, and Croatia against the Serbs. In later times German colonists settled these marches, thus inaugurating the eastward expansion of the Germans

which is sometimes called the *Drang nach Osten* ("Push to the East"). Charles also fought against the Moslems in Spain. In his first campaign (778) he was ambushed and defeated by the Basques (a Christian people of the Pyrenees) at Roncesvalles, which defeat poets later made the theme of a famous epic, *The Song of Roland*. Several years later Charles returned to Spain, occupied territory as far south as Barcelona, and established the Spanish march.

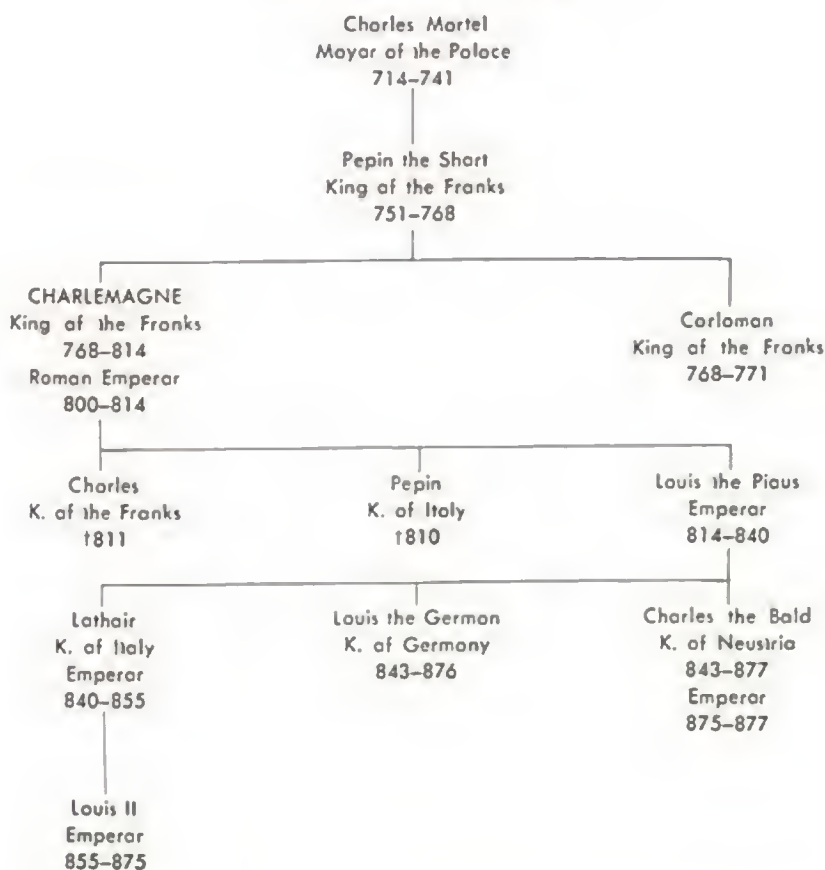
**Crowned
Emperor**

The most spectacular event of Charles's reign came when Pope Leo crowned him Roman Emperor on Christmas Day, 800. Leo III (795–816) was not a forceful pope. He had obsequiously notified Charles of his own election to the papacy and he dated his official documents by the year of the king's reign. When he was roughly manhandled and expelled from his city by a Roman mob, he fled to Charles's camp in Germany, begging protection. The king sent troops to reinstate him in his city, and when Leo was accused of various shameful deeds, Charles went to Rome in person. He allowed the pope to clear himself simply by swearing to his innocence. Two days later, as Charles was praying in St. Peter's church, Leo placed a crown on his head and hailed him as Roman Emperor. The king pretended to be surprised and displeased, but it is usually assumed that all had been arranged beforehand. Perhaps the disavowals were meant to cool the anticipated wrath of the emperor at Constantinople. Twelve years later Charles further placated this rival emperor by recognizing Byzantine claims to Venice, Croatia, and the eastern shores of the Adriatic. Nevertheless, writers sometimes maintain that Charles really was surprised, and that Leo acted on his own initiative, hoping thereby to establish the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal power.

**Division of
the Empire**

Though Charlemagne was crowned by the pope himself, his empire was very fragile. Like the Frankish kingdom of his predecessors, it was held together principally by the force of his dominating personality. As long as Charles was alive, he kept his nobles in order, developing various devices to guard against rebellions. He was an excellent organizer and administrator, and his "capitularies" (a series of elaborate laws organizing his government) give ample evidence of the care and thought he devoted to strengthening his empire. Nevertheless this empire did not long survive its creator. Charles was succeeded by his son, Louis the Pious (814–840), a well-educated and well-meaning man, but one who lacked his father's strength of character. After Louis's death, his three sons fell to quarreling, until by the Treaty of Verdun (843) they divided the empire into three parts.

THE HOUSE OF CHARLEMAGNE



† died

The territories east of the Rhine were allotted to Louis the German; the greater part of modern France went to Charles the Bald; and Italy, Provence, and a broad strip west of the Rhine fell to Lothair, along with the title of Emperor. Lothair's share was then the most important, but modern France and Germany were already beginning to take shape, and the territory that lay between them (part of which is still called Lorraine, or in German, Lothringen) has been a bone of contention ever since. The year before this division took place, Louis and Charles had met at Strasbourg (842), where they swore loyalty to each other against Lothair, with Louis swearing in French so that Charles's nobles could understand him, and Charles swearing in

German. The exact words of their oaths have been preserved, showing how the two languages were spoken in the ninth century.

**Norman
invasions**

The decline of Charlemagne's empire was not due solely to the quarrels of his grandsons. During the ninth and tenth centuries various barbarians again invaded central and western Europe, doing fearful damage wherever they went. Perhaps the most important of these invaders were Scandinavians. We have already seen (page 336) how those known as Varangians advanced southeastward to the Black Sea and founded a state at Kiev in Russia. Others turned to the west. Beginning shortly before 800, Danes and Norsemen invaded the northern and eastern parts of England while their kinsmen occupied Dublin and the adjacent parts of Ireland. Going farther afield, the Norse discovered and colonized Iceland, beginning about 860. More than a century later Erik the Red started colonizing Greenland (986), and about 1002 his son Leif Erikson sailed west and south along the coast of North America, perhaps as far as Cape Cod. Meantime other Norsemen were raiding northern France. Sailing up the Seine River, they sacked Rouen in 843 and repeatedly attacked Paris itself, their most famous siege coming in 886. A generation later, in 911, a "Norman" leader named Rollo forced the French king to recognize his lordship over the district in northern France that has ever since been known as Normandy. In exchange for this Rollo accepted the Christian religion.

**Magyar
and Moslem
attacks**

At about the same time Asiatic peoples known as the Magyars, akin to the Huns and the Turks, were forcing their way into Hungary and destroying the Avars (see page 334). Early in the tenth century they raided northern Italy and crossed Bavaria to the Rhineland and even to Burgundy (925). The Moslems too renewed their aggressions, occupying Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica, and often raiding southern France (see page 309). In 843 they attacked Rome itself. These lawless times brought with them the collapse of the Carolingian Empire.

25. THE FEUDAL SYSTEM

OUT of the chaos resulting from the renewed barbarian invasions and the breakdown of the Carolingian Empire arose the economic, social, military, and political system that we call feudalism. First appearing in the eighth century in northern France and spreading thence throughout western Europe, feudalism reached its highest development in the twelfth century, after which it fell into decline. Like most medieval institutions, it inherited many essential features from the late Roman Empire and others from the Germans, but these legacies were reshaped to suit new conditions and tempered with Christian idealism. The spirit of feudalism reached out into almost every corner of medieval life to put its mark upon the basic thinking of all sorts and conditions of men, or perhaps we should say that feudalism best caught and expressed the fundamental spirit of the Middle Ages. Even after its decline, the fundamental concepts of feudalism continued to influence Western thinking, and today the laws and customs of western Europe and America are still permeated with feudal ideas.

*Feudalism
character-
istic of the
Middle Ages*

While we commonly speak of the "feudal system," it seems at first glance that nothing could be less systematic than this "system." The arrangement of social and economic details varied widely from province to province, and the status of individuals under feudalism was often very complicated. Medieval lawyers worked out theories of feudalism that supposedly explained everything but, as usual, such theories departed rather widely from the actual state of affairs. It therefore seems best to leave all legalistic theories to one side for the moment and to describe instead the typical features of feudalism as they actually existed.

*Its unsys-
tematic
character*

**Its manifold
expressions**

The new feudal society was almost wholly agrarian, for towns and trade had virtually ceased to exist in western Europe. The economic unit at the base of feudal society was a rural estate called a manor. Various new relationships arose between man and man, notably those of lord and vassal. New methods of recruiting military forces, new forms of taxation, and new mechanisms of government were devised. And finally, out of it all came the code of ethics which we associate with chivalry. Let us examine each of these aspects of feudalism in turn.

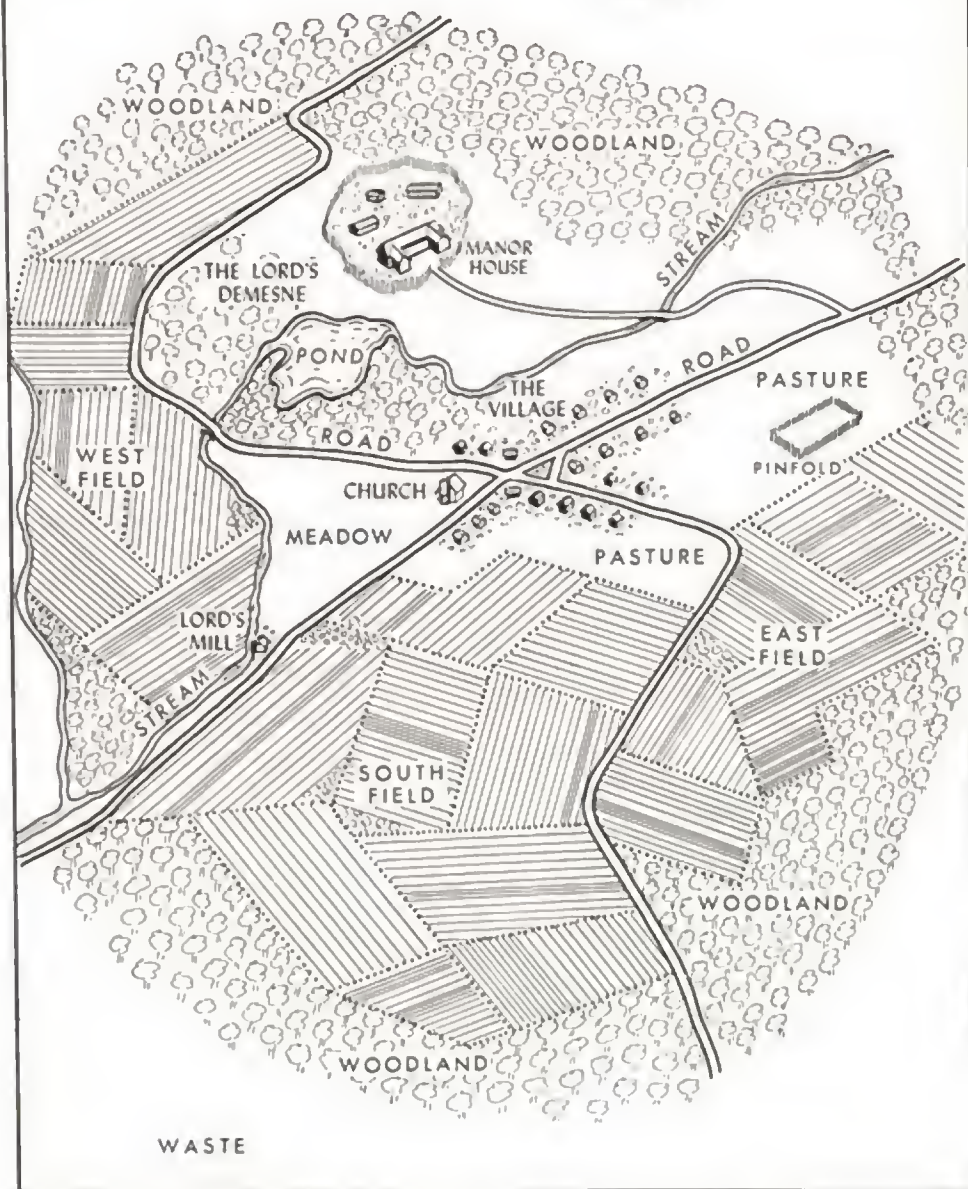
The Manor**The manor
house**

The manor was the medieval continuation of the late Roman villa. The larger manors might cover an area of twenty or more square miles, the smaller ones as little as six or eight, but in every case their size was determined largely by the lay of the land and efficiency of operation. A manor usually was just an open clearing in the midst of a forest. The principal building on the estate was the manor house, built on a hill or at some other easily defended spot. This manor house, its barns, and a rather large yard were surrounded by a strong palisade, behind which the inhabitants of the manor, along with their cattle and other possessions, might take refuge in case of raid or attack. At first the manor house and palisade might be rather primitive, but in later times a few manor houses were beautiful and elaborate palaces while others were virtually impregnable fortresses and castles, surrounded by walls and a moat. In the manor house dwelt the lord of the manor, his family, his retainers, and his personal servants. The remaining inhabitants of the manor, who might number two or three hundred, lived not far away in their cottages in the village, where there was also a mill, a church, and perhaps other buildings for common use.

**Three-
field
system**

Some fields of the manor were used as pasture, and each village had a wood lot close by, but most of the land was under plow. As men then knew of no fertilizer except manure (of which they never had an adequate supply), they could keep fields fertile only by frequently letting them lie fallow and by crop rotation. Farmers therefore used what is known as the "three-field system" of agriculture. They planted a given field one year with a fall crop such as wheat, the second year with a spring crop, perhaps oats or peas, and the third year they let it lie fallow. If all the fields of the manor

WASTE



WASTE

A MEDIEVAL MANOR. The above sketch represents a conventionalized medieval manor. Note the three fields, labeled "West," "South," and "East." Each year one field was planted with a winter crop, such as wheat, the second with a spring crop, such as turnips or peas, and the third was allowed to lie fallow. The fertility of the soil was maintained by rotating these crops. Note also that each of these fields is divided into long strips. Each peasant was given one or more strips in each field. Hay was cut in the meadow and cattle were turned loose in the pasture. At night the cattle were driven into the pinfold. The lord lived in the manor house, which with the barns was surrounded by a palisade. A whole field, with a vegetable garden and orchard, might be set aside as his demesne, and he would hold several strips (shaded on a map) in the other fields. The entire manor was surrounded by woodland or waste.

were evenly distributed in these three groups, a fairly regular production of grain and other crops might be expected year by year. In practice, however, the system was rarely worked out with mathematical accuracy, and the farmer's ignorance kept the land poor.

**Farming
methods**

The agricultural methods in use on the manors were still primitive, yet progress had been made. Men had invented a new type of plow, with a blade that could turn a furrow, and a plowman could now turn up the earth to a depth of six or eight inches, whereas the plow used in Greek and Roman times scratched the surface to a depth of only three or four inches. Crops were better than before, yet only rarely did a field produce more than eight or ten bushels of wheat to the acre, of which a quarter had to be saved for seed. (An Illinois farmer today would expect four times as large a yield, though planting the same two bushels of seed.) As the cattle on the manor all ran in the common pasture, the breeding of superior stock was impossible; animals were poor and undernourished, and most of them were slaughtered in the fall because there was so little fodder for the winter. Near the manor house was the lord's vegetable garden, and perhaps his vineyard and orchard, while individual peasants might have theirs near their cottages.

**Open-field
system**

The pasture and wood lot might perhaps be regarded as the common possession of everyone on the manor, for all had the right to use them freely, but the plowed land was held separately by individual peasants. Large unfenced fields were divided into long strips, each about an acre in area, and several strips were assigned to each peasant individually. To keep the division as equitable as possible, one man would be given strips in several parts of the manor, some being in good land and others in bad, and in theory at least the strips were redistributed annually. It cannot be said, therefore, that the individual peasant owned his strips, even though he had the right to use a specified number of them. All the peasants of the manor worked side by side during the plowing and harvest seasons, paying no attention to the strips, but each man was entitled to the produce of his own land only. Moreover, many of the strips, and sometimes whole fields, called the *demesne*, were reserved for the lord of the manor. The peasants plowed and harvested these strips along with their own, but the crops went to the lord. Peasants were also required to perform various other labors for the lord, all of which services might perhaps be considered rent for the strips of land they received. The lord, on the other hand, might contribute useful

services as overseer and administrator, but generally he left such duties to a hired steward. Most important of all, he provided his peasants with protection.

Deseended in large part from the early inhabitants who had introduced agriculture to the region in neolithic times, or from more prosperous Gauls or Germans who had sunk in the social and economic scale, these peasants were serfs, but they were not slaves. Their lord could neither sell them nor evict them from the manor. As long as they performed their half of the bargain, tilling his land and rendering him the other stipulated services, their tenure was secure. On the other hand, serfs were bound to the soil, that is to say, they might not leave the manor if dissatisfied with conditions or even if a cruel and lawless lord habitually exacted more than his rightful due. It is well to remember, however, that it was not only the law that kept serfs attached to their manors. In the early Middle Ages there was no place to which a dissatisfied serf might go. He would not be received on another manor, where the serfs would scarcely relish sharing their lands with him. The principal avenue of escape was to become a priest or enter a monastery, though the church would not receive him if he already had a wife and children. Many serfs did run away, however, or were crowded from their manors by lack of land. They wandered about the countryside in crowds, working a little for their meals at harvest time, perhaps, begging and pilfering where they could, and making the most of the charity of monasteries. Western Europe was full of such unfortunates, and until the twelfth century or later, the unhappy serf had little hope of bettering his status by leaving his manor. Throughout the Middle Ages there were a certain number of slaves and slave traders in western Europe, but the slaves were mostly house servants or artisans employed by the lords, or the property of traders exporting them to the East.

Serfdom

Most necessities besides food could be produced on the manor. When sheep were shorn, the wool was carded, spun, and woven by the peasants and their wives in the cottages. Lumber could be procured from nearby forests, and peasants had the skill to make for themselves whatever houses, furniture, and other wooden articles they needed. Other important articles might be manufactured by artisans at the manor house, but there were always a few necessities that the manor could not produce. Metal was needed for knives, tools, and weapons. Salt was required by both men and cattle, and was

***Manor
almost self-
sufficient***

also used to preserve the meat of animals slaughtered in the fall. The village church required incense and silk vestments. The dwellers in the manor house sometimes enjoyed a few luxuries such as silks and spices from the Orient. Trade therefore continued, though its volume dwindled to a mere trickle. Nearly everybody drew his living directly from the soil, and for several centuries the manor remained the fundamental unit in the economic life of western Europe.

Lord and Vassals

Feudalism and social status

The feudal system, when fully developed, assigned a clearly defined status to every member of society, and society as a whole took on the appearance of a pyramid. At its top stood the king, without peer, and its broad base was made up of the peasants or serfs who formed the vast majority of the population. Between king and serfs were stationed various ranks of free men, many recognized as the lords of others beneath them and all classified as the vassals of someone else above them, until at last the king himself was reached. The resulting relations between lord and vassal were extremely complicated, yet the whole organization of society depended upon them.

Vassalage

Vassalage implied the dependence of one man (the vassal) upon another whom he recognized as his lord. To become a vassal, a man "commended" himself to another by going through the ceremony known as "homage." Kneeling before his lord, he placed his hands in the lord's and solemnly swore "fealty," that is, he promised to be the lord's man. The lord then formally accepted him as vassal. Thereafter the two men were obligated to give each other loyalty and support, each in his own way. The failure of either to live up to his side of the agreement was regarded as a disgraceful if not a criminal act. The relations of a lord and his vassals, up to this point, differed but little from those between the ancient Roman patron and his clients, but military developments presently added new features to the compact.

New model armies of cavalry

The armies of the Merovingian kings had been recruited largely in the old-fashioned way, based on the German *comitatus* (see page 406), and as these armies were made up of Frankish infantry, the serfs of Gaul had no part in them. The soldiers were a Frankish elite, supported by their leaders. The kings and lesser Frankish leaders held

large tracts of land, cultivated by Gallo-Roman serfs, and from their revenues, as well as from booty, they drew the wherewithal to support their followers. The Moslem invasion of Gaul in the eighth century (see page 307) created a new situation, for thereafter cavalry replaced infantry as the backbone of the army. As every soldier must now be provided with a horse and a coat of mail, armies became highly expensive. Charles Martel and the Carolingians solved the problem of paying for them by granting lands to anyone who would serve at his own expense in the new-model armies. Sometimes the lands thus granted came from the king's own vast estates, sometimes they were taken (either with or without compensation) from the equally vast estates of the church, and sometimes they were private estates that had been confiscated. In this way the greater part of the agricultural land of western Europe eventually passed to the military leaders who were the king's vassals.

Military service and vassalage thus came to be associated with landholding. Each important leader, as a vassal of the king, received from him large estates made up of many manors, in return for which he served in the king's army with a specified number of followers. Some of the manors he retained for his own use and support, but others were distributed among his followers (his vassals), who were thus paid for their subordinate service. In the end it came to be considered that one manor—called a “knight's fee”—was standard pay for forty days of military service a year by a knight with horse, armor, and squire (shield-bearer). As the king also required the services of other persons—secretaries, treasurers, judges, and the like—he paid them too with grants of land and made them his vassals. By the tenth century virtually all free men, except the few traders and artisans and perhaps the clergy, were the vassals of somebody else and either vassals or sub-vassals of the king.

**Land and
military
service**

These grants of lands were never outright gifts, but merely conditional grants. The lord would “invest” his vassal with the land, that is to say, grant him the use of it. If for any reason the vassal failed to perform the services expected of him, the land went back to the lord. When vassals received land, the ceremony known as “investiture” supplemented “commendation” and an estate granted to a vassal by this tenure was called a “fief” (from the Germanic *feoh* “cattle” or “property” in general: Latin *feudum*, whence our word “feudal”). It might be said, therefore, that the king owned all the land

Investiture

in his realm (except certain church lands, perhaps) and rented it out in exchange for services of one sort or another. Or it might be said that the land was public property whose revenue went to persons performing public services. This process of letting out land was repeated again and again, each sub-vassal getting a portion of his lord's fief, until at last the lord of a manor distributed strips among the peasants who served him by cultivating his demesne.

**Primo-
geniture**

Fiefs reverted to the lord on the vassal's death, but in the ninth century it became customary to grant them immediately to his son, unless there was strong reason for not doing so. As one manor could scarcely support two or more knights, the eldest son alone inherited his father's estate. This system, by which the eldest son inherits all his father's property, is known as primogeniture. As the continued subdivision of larger estates would likewise have caused great difficulties in recruiting the army, and as the kings always needed rich and powerful vassals, primogeniture soon became the rule everywhere, and younger sons had to find other careers for themselves. Many entered the service of higher nobles or of the king himself, hoping that estates might be found for them. Others became priests or monks, knowing that family influence would soon bring them lucrative and important offices in the church. Others colonized the marches set up by Charlemagne, and still others conquered new lands, or went on simple plundering raids. It thus came about, as an unexpected consequence of primogeniture, that younger sons played an exceptional part in the expansion of western European power and culture.

The Feudal State

**Governing
class under
feudalism**

Rarely in history have government and military power been identified with the organized economic interests of the state so openly and so closely as was the case under feudalism. In those days the wealth of Europe lay in its land and the labor of its peasants, and the men who owned and controlled this land and who profited most from this labor made up the governing class of the state. It makes little difference whether we accept the lawyers' theory that the land all belonged to the king, or prefer a more realistic theory that it belonged to the great lords before whom, and without whom, the king was virtually helpless, or even if we content ourselves with the simple but unsound theory that each manor belonged to its lord. In any case, the operations of

government were conducted directly by the men who owned and controlled the land and labor of western Europe. The organized economic interests of the country managed the feudal state; they assumed such governmental functions as the military, the police, justice, and taxation; and they determined policy.

While the great feudal states were being built up along these lines, lawyers were busy developing elaborate theories about government and the ultimate source of political power. In their opinion, all power and authority trickled down from above, that is to say, from the king, through his great vassals, to the lords of the manors. Out of courtesy these lawyers might add that power really descended to the king from God, and ecclesiastics might insert the pope between the king and the Deity, saying that all power descended from God through the pope to the king and ultimately to his vassals. Such theories might look very nice on paper, but the realities of the situation were rather different. An exceptionally strong king, such as Charlemagne, might hold a large state together for a few years, but these elaborate constructions always collapsed with the great king's death. In general, the kings had to heed their great nobles, and these high nobles, in turn, depended upon their own vassals. If this support was not forthcoming, as it sometimes was not, the king was powerless and his state fell to pieces.

The feudal system thus tended to divide Europe into countless tiny states, each largely independent of the others and often at war with its neighbors. Many factors cooperated to accelerate these disintegrating forces. The slowness of communication, and the wretched state of roads and bridges, rendered it difficult for the king to send troops quickly to reduce an insubordinate vassal. Ambitious lords could with impunity usurp powers to which they had no right under feudal law. Moreover, weak kings could often be forced to grant new and exceptional privileges to certain vassals. If a Merovingian or early Carolingian king desperately needed the services of a certain vassal in an emergency, he might reward him with various "immunities" from royal interference, that is to say, he freed him and his heirs from various obligations, and virtually made him the independent ruler of a small state. As time went on, and immunities were granted more frequently, their proud possessors became a serious source of weakness to the crown. We must also remember that each vassal's loyalty was to his immediate lord, and that it did not rise to that man's superiors. If an intermediate vassal turned against his lord, he certainly was guilty of

*The source
of power*

*Fragmenta-
tion of
Europe*

treason, yet his own vassals were bound to follow him. Should they fail to do so, they would be guilty of treason themselves, even though their treason consisted solely in supporting their lawful king! In those days men had no conception of national patriotism or of a supreme loyalty to king and country.

**Feudal
courts
and law**

A few other aspects of feudal government deserve brief mention, among them the administration of justice. Every lord, from the local lord of a manor up to the king himself, held a court with civil and criminal jurisdiction. As every case brought fees and perhaps fines to the court, there was much quarreling between lords over jurisdiction, but in general the more important—and more lucrative—cases went to the higher lords or to the king. As the church maintained a rival set of courts, handling both spiritual and temporal cases, further bitter controversy often arose (see page 508). The law used in the lords' courts was the old traditional Germanic law, somewhat modified by Roman ideas to suit new conditions. Though Charlemagne and other kings issued many capitularies, most of them dealt with purely administrative matters, and it was not until much later that the kings touched private law—that is, the law regulating the relations of private citizens to each other.

**Feudal
taxation**

Problems of taxation were especially difficult under the feudal system. The lords of the manors were able to compel their serfs to perform a certain amount of labor on roads, bridges, and fortifications, and they collected tolls from passing traders. But these lords were most reluctant to contribute anything to their superiors. Feudal thought-patterns being what they were, a lord considered it not "honorable" to pay taxes. The higher authorities respected his scruples and salved his conscience by calling his payments "aids" to the king—which were perfectly honorable, being free gifts. When a man inherited his father's fief, he was forced to pay a "relief," usually amounting to the first year's revenue from that fief. If a vassal died before his eldest son came of age, the lord became the boy's guardian and collected the revenues of the estate until the lad grew up: this was called "wardship." The lord also collected a fee when the vassal's eldest daughter was married. And if a vassal died without heirs his estates "escheated" (reverted) to his lord. Such revenues as these were never enough, however, and kings were always in financial straits. Not until the revival of trade brought new sources of revenue could they embark upon large enterprises without the preliminary aid of their vassals—or even keep these vassals in order.

Much has been written about the disruptive tendencies of feudalism. It is quite true that feudalism often made a strong national state impossible. Whatever the theory of power may have been, the great lords, and many of the lesser ones, were usually able to act about as they chose. They could defy their superiors with impunity and tyrannize over those beneath them. They were rugged individualists. In time they became a curse to society, but in their heyday they did many useful things that the kings could not do. They saved Europe from the barbarians, and they developed a military skill which, during the crusades, was shown to be superior to that of Byzantines or Moslems. The feudal lords are also reproached with tyrannizing over their peasants. Many lords doubtless were guilty of such conduct, but we may well question whether any considerable number of persons in western Europe ever reached the state of abject servility that pervaded all classes of society in the Byzantine Empire.

*Merits and
demerits of
the lords*

The feudal lord had a high regard for his own rights, and he defended them vigorously. It is true that he was interested only in his own rights, and perhaps in those of other members of his own class, yet his struggles to maintain these rights established many precedents which men of other social classes later invoked against the tyrannical governments of their day. When feudal lords refused to pay any taxes except the "aids" which they gave of their own free will, they went far toward establishing the principle that all taxes must be voted by those who pay them and that taxation without representation is tyranny. When, in 1215, the English barons forced King John to accept Magna Carta (see page 489), they were acting in a strictly feudal spirit, assuring only the rights of their own class, but several centuries later this document was falsely interpreted as guaranteeing these rights to all Englishmen (see page 775). We have seen that the relations between lord and vassal were based on a bilateral contract entered into at the time the vassal paid homage to his lord. Whatever medieval theorists may have said in their legal treatises, feudal government was really a government based on contracts to which all parties had agreed. In later ages, when men wished to oppose an oppressive government, they devised the "contract theory of government" to check the growing power of the state (see page 799). Feudal lords had done much the same thing centuries before. In times such as ours, when thoughtful persons are much concerned about the possible tyranny of the all-powerful state, it is well to remember that in its day feudalism contributed mightily to the progress of liberty.

*Lords and
"liberty"*

*Chivalry***Feudal
idealism
expressed
in chivalry**

In conclusion a few words may be in order about feudal idealism as expressed in chivalry. Our word "chivalry" is derived from the French *chevalier*, meaning "horseman" or "knight." Chivalry was the code of conduct that feudal knights were supposed to follow. Not all medieval knights were nobles, and not all nobles were knights, but in general the two groups consisted of the same persons. The ideals of knighthood were accepted in theory by all aristocrats, and from them these ideals filtered down to the lesser people.

**Training
a knight**

The training and education of a knight were long and difficult. From early childhood he was taught horsemanship, hunting, and jousting, and as a youth he probably attended the court of a noble or the king as a page, in order to accustom himself to the social graces of the time, but his literary education was sadly neglected. He would then serve for a time as squire, or shield-bearer, for a knight—perhaps his father or some other kinsman—and when he had given proof of skill and courage on the field of battle he would be "dubbed" a knight. In early times the ceremony of dubbing was quite simple. The man who was to be dubbed knelt before his lord, who struck him lightly over the shoulder with the flat side of his sword, after which the new knight bore a sword and a shield emblazoned with his coat of arms. In later times the ceremony was greatly elaborated and given a strongly religious hue, with the knight swearing that he would ever remain faithful to all the noblest ideals of chivalry.

**The ideals
of chivalry**

The chivalric notions set forth in the romantic literature of the late Middle Ages (see page 589) are perhaps unduly fanciful, yet as civilization advanced chivalry developed its idealistic side. The good knight was not merely a skillful fighter; he was supposed to be a gentleman as well. Men have often changed their ideas as to what constitutes a gentleman, but the men of the Middle Ages had quite definite views as to what a knight and gentleman should be and do. The perfect knight must remain loyal to his superiors and to his oath, for loyalty was perhaps the greatest of virtues. He must also be brave and courteous, kind to all, and ready to help those in need. He must guard his honor and the honor of knighthood in general. He might fight only for noble causes and in honorable ways, despising trickery and deceit. He must live for honor and glory, rather than for material rewards, and he must be quick to honor others when honor was their due.

It is to be feared that knights did not always live up to these lofty ideals. If we are to accept the testimony of contemporary writers (mostly churchmen), many knights shared the manners and morals of modern American gangsters. Yet it would be foolish to assert that the ideals of chivalry had no beneficent influence upon the conduct of the aristocracy and the people as a whole. Like Christianity itself, chivalry did much to refine life in these crude and difficult times and to spread civilization through Europe.

*Civilizing
influence
of chivalry*

26. THE STATES OF EUROPE

The stem duchies in Germany

THE last of Charlemagne's descendants to rule in the German part of his empire was Louis the Child, who died in 911, aged eighteen, after a nominal rule of eleven years. The kingdom of Louis the German had by then disintegrated, and the most powerful persons in central Europe were the dukes of the five great "stem duchies"—so called because they supposedly were based on ancient tribal divisions (*Stämme*) of the Germans. The five stem duchies were Saxony and Bavaria in the east, Swabia, Franconia, and Lorraine in the west, the last having recently been snatched from the heirs of Lothair. After the death of Louis the Child, the five dukes began the practice of electing one of their number king, granting him a sort of leadership, but taking elaborate precautions to make sure that he should not become strong enough to restrain the feudal liberties of the others. The first king thus chosen, Conrad of Franconia (911–918), was a man of little consequence. Next came Henry of Saxony (919–936), whose line retained the royal title until 1024. After a life spent fighting the Slavs and Magyars on his eastern frontiers, Henry was succeeded by his son, Otto I the Great (936–973).

Otto I

Otto at once showed himself to be a man of high ambition. When he was crowned at Charlemagne's old capital, Aachen, he gave places of honor at the ceremony to the four other dukes, but his determination to be supreme quickly spoiled this early harmony. He defeated his four rivals, one after another, and replaced them with kinsmen or friends whom he could dominate and trust. A great victory at Lechfeld (955) put an end to the Magyar raids, once and for all, after which Otto actively colonized Austria with Bavarians. He also planted German colonists, ruled by German bishops, in the Slavic lands between the Elbe and the Oder. As the Kingdom of Burgundy (the part of

Lothair's old kingdom that lies in southeastern France between Italy and the Rhone, Switzerland and the sea) was under a boy king. Otto forced the lad to recognize his overlordship, thereby preparing the way for a reversion of the kingdom to his successors (1032). But Otto's most spectacular acts took place in Italy.

After the death of Lothair's son (Louis II, 855-875), northern Italy had fallen more deeply into feudal anarchy than any other part of the Carolingian Empire. Local nobles ruled various parts of it, subjecting the unhappy peninsula to many afflictions. Magyars repeatedly invaded the north, Moslems harassed the south, and the Byzantine emperors made serious attempts to reestablish their authority. Meantime the popes, as secular rulers of the Papal States, had been sucked deep into the sink of Italian politics, and in the tenth century they reached a very low level of influence and respect. For almost fifty years they were the creatures of a powerful Roman nobleman, who almost succeeded in making the papacy hereditary in his family. Some of these popes, notably John XII (955-963), scandalized all Italy by their debauched private lives, but their chief public concern was with their secular estates.

*Confusion
in Italy*

In the year 961 John XII was engaged in a serious quarrel with a grandee calling himself the King of Italy. The pope appealed to Otto for aid, and Otto, having by this time pacified Germany, decided to regulate Italy. Crossing the Alps with an army, he was crowned King of Italy at Pavia, and, after advancing to Rome, had himself crowned Emperor by John early in 962. When John repented of his complianee and rebelled against Otto, the new emperor summoned a council of Rome's local clergy, which obligingly deposed the pope and made Otto's secretary his successor. John died shortly thereafter while trying to regain his office by force of arms (965).

*Otto
crowned
Emperor*

The coronation of Otto marked a resurrection of the Carolingian Empire and, at least in the minds of Otto and his friends, it was also a revival of the Roman Empire itself. Legalists spoke of the "translation" of power from Rome to Otto, in whom they saw a true successor of Augustus. The new empire was also a Christian empire, however, and the protector of the church. It was therefore called the Holy Roman Empire. Eventually this new empire came to be regarded as a logical working out of the pyramidal theories of feudalism, according to which the whole social and political structure should culminate in one apex, while its base covered all the world, or at least all Christendom. Otto presently arranged the marriage of his son to a daughter of

*The Holy
Roman
Empire*

the Byzantine emperor, claiming southern Italy as an immediate dowry and apparently hoping that the whole Byzantine Empire would eventually fall to his heirs. Though these schemes came to nothing, the Holy Roman Empire continued to govern parts of Europe, after a fashion, for upward of eight hundred years, until Napoleon abolished it in 1806.

Henry III

Otto's heirs continued to rule until the death of his great-nephew in 1024. They were followed by a line of emperors from Franconia, known as the Salians, who ruled for almost exactly a century (1024–1125). Second in the line was Henry III (1039–1056), who is often referred to as the most successful of the Holy Roman emperors. In his own right he was duke of three stem duchies; he kept the other dukes and lesser feudal lords in order; he extended German influence eastward at the expense of Poles, Bohemians, and Magyars; he remained powerful in the church, using bishops as his assistants in local government and as high court officials; deposing three rival popes (1046), he replaced them with a line of German popes; and he went far toward creating an imperial bureaucracy, independent of the feudal lords, to manage the central administration. Unfortunately these successes antagonized a wide variety of persons, and when the king died he left to his six-year-old son and heir, Henry IV (1056–1106), an empire on the verge of revolt. After a regency of six years by his mother, the young Henry was kidnaped by the archbishop of Cologne (1062), who then governed in his name until the boy was declared of age in 1066. Henry at once found himself faced with serious baronial revolts, especially in Saxony, but his greatest difficulties were with the church, which was then undergoing a remarkable transformation.

Empire and Papacy

Cluny under Odilo

The papacy had sunk to its lowest level during the tenth century, when a series of unworthy popes enjoyed neither power nor prestige. Churches were governed by local bishops, who often owed their position to feudal lords. Yet at this very time the church was being revitalized by a reform movement emanating from a monastery founded in 910 at Cluny in central France. At first the monks of Cluny sought only to reform monastic life, which like so many other things had suffered decay, and they were so successful that monasteries in all parts of Europe adopted their reforms and even affiliated themselves with the house at Cluny. Under an energetic abbot named Odilo

(994-1049), the Cluniac monks went further and urged a sweeping reform of the church and especially of the clergy. The pious emperor Henry III was in deep sympathy with their ideas, and the German popes whom he set up in Rome brought the papacy over to the side of the reformers.

The reformers of Cluny insisted especially upon three things. The first was celibacy of the clergy. From early times the church had regarded celibacy as preferable to marriage, and the Roman Church had forbidden priests to marry, but on every hand there were priests and bishops whose chief concern was to secure ample estates for their illegitimate children. The Cluniacs were determined to stop this scandal. The second reform they demanded was the abolition of "simony," or the purchase of ecclesiastical offices. Such offices had often been bought by unworthy men who coveted the enormous revenues of a bishop or abbot. Thirdly, the reformers demanded the abolition of "lay investiture." We have seen that there was room for doubt as to the exact status of church lands and clergymen under the feudal system (see page 427), and lawyers often insisted that church officials should pay homage for whatever lands they held. By refusing to accept the homage of any but their own men, lords could dictate the election of officials, but the reformers insisted that the church should have a completely free hand in choosing officials. The question thus became: Has a layman the right to invest a clergyman with his fief? And finally, in a more general way, the reformers wished to exalt the power and prestige of the papacy whenever and wherever possible.

**Cluniac
reform
program**

Mild reforms bearing a Cluniac flavor were effected by Henry III's German popes, but the great papal reformer was Gregory VII (1073-1085). This remarkable man was one of the greatest popes in history, and more than any other one man he was the creator of the medieval papal monarchy—of which more will be said in another chapter (see page 304). Small in stature but corpulent, not especially well educated but fired with a great ideal, and with something of the martyr about him, Gregory devoted his life to advancing the cause of the papacy. Soon after taking office he issued several decrees repeating older rules against simony and clerical marriage, and added others against lay investiture (1075). In these last decrees the emperor, Henry IV (1056-1106), saw a menace to his whole system of government, for he assigned crucial posts to bishops and abbots who were his vassals. Henry therefore ignored the decrees. When Gregory protested, the emperor declared him a usurper and ordered a convention of bishops

Gregory VII

to depose him. Gregory replied by excommunicating Henry and releasing all vassals from their vows of fealty to him (1076). The German nobles wanted no better excuse to resume their rebellions, and Henry, thus reduced to dire extremities, was forced to seek peace with the pope.

**Henry at
Canossa**

Then followed a scene which romantic historians have sometimes pictured as the supreme triumph of the papacy. In the midst of winter Henry crossed the Alps and met the pope at Canossa (1077). Only after the king had stood barefoot and scantily clad in the snow for three days at his castle gate did Gregory deign to receive him. But being a priest, Gregory had to absolve the penitent. As soon as he had been forgiven, Henry hurried back to Germany, settled accounts with his rebellious nobles, and resumed his quarrel with Gregory. Again Gregory excommunicated him (1080), but this time the papal thunder had no serious repercussions. Henry invaded Italy with an army, entered Rome, deposed Gregory, and set up a rival pope, from whom he received the imperial crown (1084). The next year Gregory died in exile at Salerno in southern Italy.

**Henry's
decline**

Henry IV continued to rule for twenty-two years after this triumph, but his reign was a sad story of decline. His nobles caused such trouble at home that he was forced to withdraw his troops from Italy, which enabled a new pope (Urban II, 1088-1099) to continue the work begun by Gregory. Henry was not even permitted to redeem his status as the leading protector of Christianity by taking part in the First Crusade, launched by Urban in 1095.

**Concordat
of Worms
(1122)**

Henry was succeeded by his son, Henry V (1106-1125), who continued his father's policies, both in Germany and as regards the papacy. After long quarreling, the matter of lay investiture was finally settled by a compromise known as the Concordat of Worms (1122). It was agreed that thereafter bishops should be elected in the presence of the emperor or his representative, that the emperor should invest the man elected with his secular possessions, and that the church authorities should then invest him with the perquisites of his spiritual office. Each side thus retained an effective veto on all elections. Three years later Henry died, and with him the Salian line of emperors came to an end.

**Loss and
gain from
the Empire**

Historians have since engaged in much acrimonious dispute as to the merits of the Holy Roman Empire in this early period. Italian historians have often accused the Germans of ruining Italy. In the nineteenth century, when the ideal of the national state was accepted

everywhere and especially in Germany, German historians denounced this dream of a world empire as a mere will-o'-the-wisp. They roundly denounced the Ottos and the Henrys for wasting German blood and treasure in so vain an enterprise. It was largely because of their activities, the critics alleged, that Germany and Italy were unable to achieve unity and their just place in the world. In more recent times, however, historians have found more to praise in the imperial system. They point out that feudal anarchy had created a "power vacuum" in Italy, and that if the Germans had not intervened someone else would have done so. Italy would probably have suffered worse indignities under Byzantine or Saracen masters. (The Saracens had recently seized Sicily, Sardinia, and Corsica.) Nor is it true that the Italian expeditions seriously weakened Germany. The emperors who made these expeditions also created a strong government in Germany and launched the great German migration to the east. Contact with Italy, on the other hand, had something of a civilizing influence on the Germans in the next few centuries; and, as usual, traders followed the armies and eventually built up strong commercial connections. And perhaps the medieval dream of world unity seems less inane today than it did to historians writing a hundred years ago.

France

Members of the Carolingian dynasty in France continued to call themselves kings for more than a hundred years after the death of Charlemagne's grandson, Charles the Bald (877), but none enjoyed regal power. When these kings showed that they could not defend the country against the Normans and other invaders, stronger men assumed the task. Northern and eastern France became a series of frontier duchies, somewhat resembling the Carolingian marches, and their commanders usually acted like independent sovereigns. One such commander was Robert the Strong, who made his reputation by defending Paris from the Normans in 866. One of Robert's sons was accepted by many as king of France from 888 to 898, though a rather helpless Carolingian nominally ruled at the same time, and another ruled in similar fashion for a few months in 923. Many years later, the intrigues of various high French ecclesiastics with Emperor Otto III caused Robert's great-grandson, Hugh Capet, to have himself crowned King of France (987). His descendants ruled France until 1792 and again from 1814 to 1848.

Hugh Capet

**Capetians
in the
Ile de France**

Hugh Capet survived his coronation by nine years, and during the next century and a half the French crown passed peacefully from father to son through four generations. These four successors of Capet performed few spectacular deeds. Though crowned and anointed as kings of France, they actually ruled only their ancestral domain—the district known as the Ile de France, which was a strip about a hundred miles long and thirty to forty miles broad extending south from the vicinity of Laon through Paris to Orléans on the Loire. The Capetians had constant trouble with other French lords, some of whom held territories larger than theirs, and with vassals in their own domain as well. Nevertheless, the Ile de France was so strategically located, both militarily and commercially, that its rulers eventually established their power over all France.









**French
provinces
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1000**

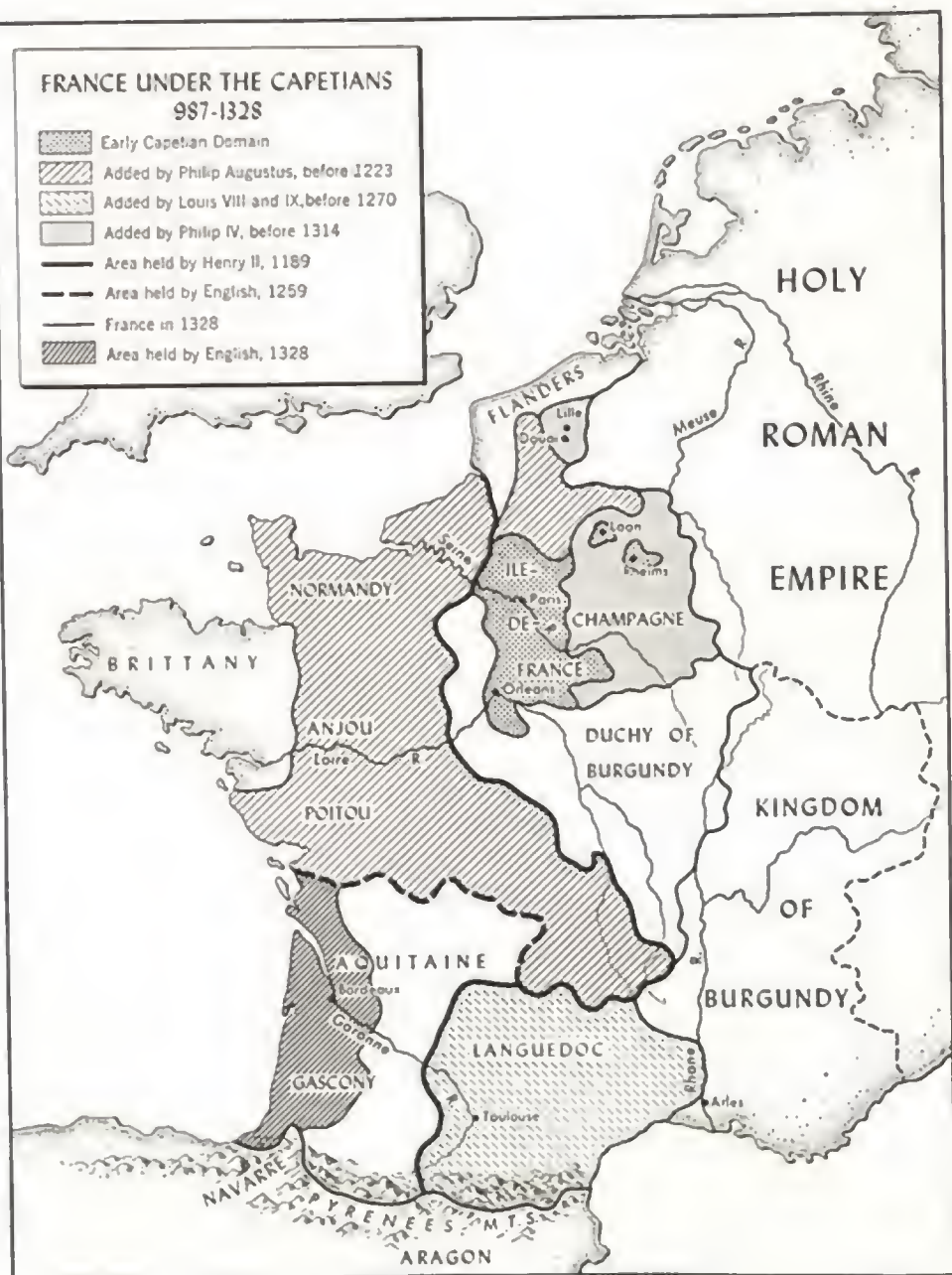
In the eleventh century the largest domain in France was the duchy of Aquitaine, south of the Loire, whose dukes had acquired Gascony and dominated the county of Toulouse. They therefore ruled everything from the Loire to the Pyrenees and from the Atlantic to the Rhone, which was more than half of the France of that day. As might be expected, these dukes usually paid scant attention to their feudal overlords, the kings of France. At this time, as we have seen, the Empire ruled the rest of southern France as the Kingdom of Burgundy. North of this kingdom, on the eastern frontier of France, the duchy of Burgundy was ruled by Capetians of a minor line stemming from a younger grandson of Hugh Capet. The most important of the northern counties was Flanders, along the English Channel. Its rulers sprang from a certain Baldwin Iron-Arm, an adventurer like Robert the Strong, and their abilities gave them power and prestige. Farther west along the Channel lay Normandy, now a duchy nominally under the French king. Norman invasions had ceased long since, the descendants of the Vikings now spoke French, and the Norman dukes had made more progress than any of their colleagues in checking the disruptive tendencies of feudalism. The northwestern tip of France, Brittany, was inhabited by a Celtic-speaking population, many of whom were descended from refugees fleeing England at the time of the Anglo-Saxon invasions in the fifth century. The early Capetians scarcely claimed to exercise power over the Bretons.

**Louis VI
the Fat**

For more than a hundred years the Capetian kings made only feeble attempts to govern these outlying duchies and counties of France, but Hugh Capet's fourth successor, Louis VI the Fat (1108–1137), undertook more aggressive policies. Having reduced his vassals in the Ile de

FRANCE UNDER THE CAPETIANS 987-1328

-  Early Capetian Domain
-  Added by Philip Augustus, before 1223
-  Added by Louis VIII and IX, before 1270
-  Added by Philip IV, before 1314
-  Area held by Henry II, 1189
-  Area held by English, 1259
-  France in 1328
-  Area held by English, 1328



France to obedience, he began disciplining refractory counts and dukes, and even aroused popular enthusiasm among the French people. His most promising accomplishment was the marriage of his son, Louis VII (1137–1180), to the redoubtable Eleanor, daughter and heiress of the Duke of Aquitaine. Young Louis was not equal to so strenuous a wife, however, and presently he divorced her (1152). Within two months she married the young man, eleven years her junior, who two years later became Henry II of England. Eleanor had met her match, Henry got half of France, and Louis relapsed into the inactivity of his father's predecessors.

England

Anglo-Saxon invasions

The Romans began to rule England in the first century after Christ, but during the next four hundred years their civilization made less impression there than it did in contemporary Gaul. Early in the fifth century when the Roman legions were withdrawn, the native British—a mixed population with Celtic elements predominating—were left to defend themselves. Soon their shores were harried by German pirates, and during the sixth century Anglo-Saxon invaders established their supremacy over most of England, but not over Scotland, Wales, or Ireland. The invaders set up no central government, however, and political unity came slowly.

Conversion of England

Christianity made only slight progress in Britain under the Romans, and it largely disappeared during the Anglo-Saxon invasions. A certain number of British Christians—among them St. Patrick (c. 359–461)—had already crossed to Ireland, however, and many inhabitants of that island had been converted. Irish missionaries then returned to preach the Gospel in Scotland and northern England. At about the same time, Pope Gregory I sent Roman missionaries under a monk named Augustine—not to be confused with the great St. Augustine, author of *The City of God*—to convert the Anglo-Saxons (597). As the Irish and Roman forms of Christianity differed on certain details—the date of Easter, for example—controversy divided British Christians until the Council of Whitby decided in favor of the Roman religion (660). A few years later an archbishop of Canterbury carefully organized the whole English church along Roman lines. Roman Christianity thus promoted the political unity of England and brought the country into closer contact with western Europe.

The first Viking raids upon the English coast came shortly before 800, and during the next seventy-five years Danish invaders made great progress in eastern and northern England (see page 420). They also founded settlements in Scotland and Ireland and on small islands nearby. At first the Anglo-Saxons offered only feeble resistance, but under Alfred the Great (871–899) the invaders were checked and confined to the northeastern half of England. They eventually were absorbed by the English, and Alfred's successors ruled all England. These successes were short-lived, for early in the eleventh century Viking invasions were renewed by Sweyn Forkbeard, king of Denmark. His son Canute (1016–1035) presided over a vast empire that included Denmark, Norway, and England. Not long after Canute's death, however, Alfred's descendants regained the throne, in the person of Edward the Confessor (1042–1066). The saintly Edward, guarding a vow of chastity taken in his youth, left no direct heirs, and shortly after his death England was invaded by William the Conqueror, who won the battle of Hastings on October 14, 1066.

**Alfred
the Great**

William had been born in 1027, the illegitimate son of the duke of Normandy. When the duke died (1035), William succeeded him, though only a boy, and presently he married a daughter of the formidable count of Flanders. Being a cousin of Edward the Confessor, William claimed the English throne through him. As soon as Edward died, William began active preparations to seize England, carefully securing papal blessing for the enterprise. After his victory at Hastings, he marched to London, where he was crowned on Christmas Day, 1066. Within five years he had crushed the last Anglo-Saxon resistance, and in 1072 he forced the king of Scotland to pay him homage. His last years were saddened by the rebellions of his eldest son, Robert, and he died while engaged in war against his feudal lord, the king of France (1087). William was succeeded in Normandy by Robert, in England by his second son, William II (1087–1100). The highly unpopular William II was followed by his brother, Henry I (1100–1135), who proved to be a wise and able ruler. Henry took Normandy from his brother Robert and continued the work of his father, the Conqueror, in blending Anglo-Saxon and Norman institutions. William the Conqueror, his two sons, and a grandson make up the Norman dynasty (1066–1154), who turned English history in radically new directions.

**William the
Conqueror**



BAYEUX TAPESTRY. This famous topestry was made only a few years after the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. It is 230 feet long and its embroidery depicts about 70 scenes in that conquest. The section shown here represents the Battle of Hastings, with both Angli (English) and Franci (Normans) falling.

**Norman
rule in
England**

The Norman kings favored Normans in both church and state, and they created what was perhaps the most efficient government in the Europe of that day. William brought the feudal system to England, where it had hitherto existed only in a rudimentary form. British feudalism therefore was not a native growth but was introduced full-grown from Normandy, and the men who introduced it had learned how to overcome many of the weaknesses it betrayed on the Continent. William forbade private wars between his feudal vassals, he prohibited the erection of fortified castles without his express permission, and he compelled all sub-vassals to take oaths of fealty directly to him as well as to their immediate overlords. William always worked closely with the church and the pope. Many Cluniac reforms were brought to the English church in his day, and though he regularly appointed bishops and abbots, he managed to avoid a quarrel over lay investiture with the formidable Gregory VII. William II, on the other hand, quarreled bitterly with the reforming archbishop of Canterbury, whom he eventually drove into exile. Henry ended the controversy in 1107 with

a compromise substantially the same as that set forth fifteen years later by the pope and the emperor in the Concordat of Worms.

England enjoyed political order and economic prosperity under the Norman kings, but the death of Henry I (1135) was followed by confusion and economic depression. After the death of his only son in 1120, Henry planned to have the English crown pass to his daughter Matilda and her husband, Geoffrey of Anjou. (Anjou is a small French county immediately south of Normandy.) Unfortunately Stephen of Blois, a son of Henry's sister, also coveted the crown. Only after eighteen years of civil war did the two factions reach a compromise (1153) by which the crown would go to Henry Plantagenet (1133–1189), the son of Geoffrey and Matilda, after the death of Stephen. A year later this young man ascended the throne as Henry II, the founder of the Plantagenet, or Angevin, dynasty which ruled England for two centuries and a half (1154–1399).

**Stephen
and
Matilda**

The Reconquest of Spain

Meantime events in Spain were turning in a new direction. Moslem power in the peninsula had reached its height in the tenth century, under Abd-er-Rahman III (912–961), who proclaimed himself caliph and made his capital, Cordova, the largest and most civilized city west of Constantinople. His successors were not his equals, and early in the next century his kingdom was torn to pieces by rival emirs. At the same time the Christian states of northern Spain began reconquering territory. At first the most important of these states was León, in the extreme northwest. On its eastern border lay Castile, so called from its many castles built as defenses against the Moslems, and still farther east were Navarre, Aragon, and the county of Barcelona, once the Carolingian Spanish march. These petty states often fought with each other as well as with the Moslems, but usually they were held together by their common antagonism to the invaders.

**Moslem
grandeur
and decline**

The cause of Christianity in Spain was greatly advanced in 899 when someone found a set of bones which were declared to be those of St. James—one of the Twelve Apostles—miraculously transported from Palestine, where James had been executed A.D. 42. St. James (in Spanish, *Santiago*) became the patron saint of Spain, and a famous shrine was erected at Santiago de Compostela (northwestern Spain) on the spot where the bones had been found. Throughout the Middle

Santiago

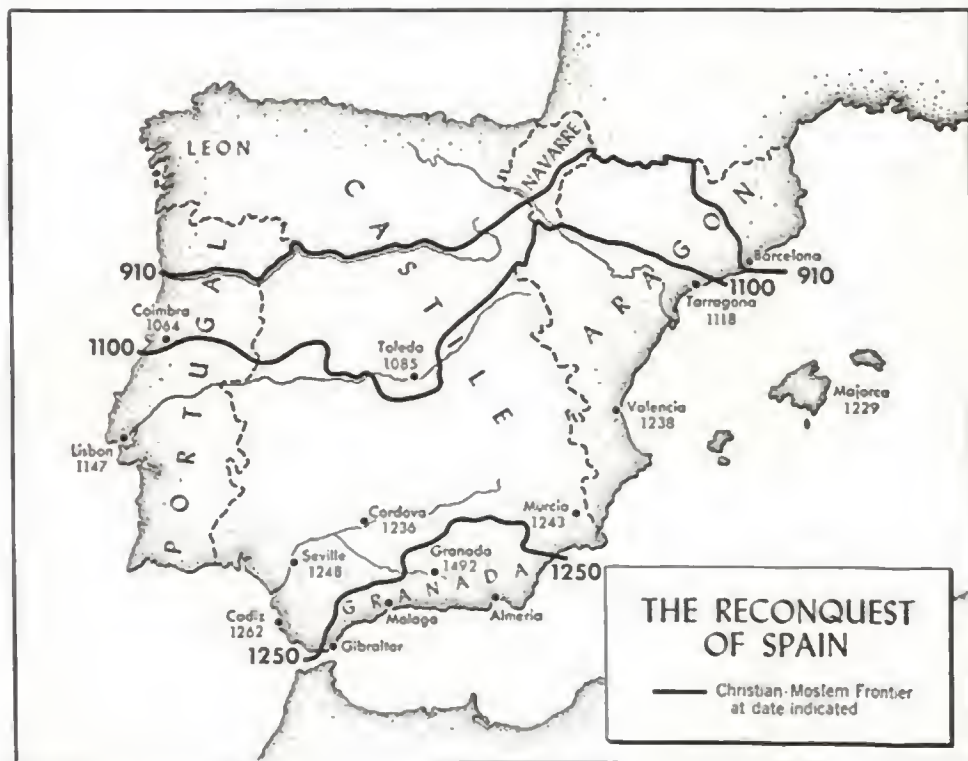


CHURCH OF SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA. After the discovery in 899 of the supposed bones of St. James (in Spanish, Santiago), Compostela became one of the principal centers of pilgrimage in Europe. A large church was built at the shrine in the twelfth century, to which many additions were made later. (Galloway)

Ages this shrine remained one of the most popular in Europe and was visited by thousands of pilgrims. These visitors then disseminated to every part of western Europe the story of Spain, her holy wars, and the marvelous opportunities they offered to adventurers.

The first spectacular success of the Spaniards against the Moslems came when Alfonso VI of Castile (1072–1109) captured Toledo in 1085. One of Alfonso's aides was the famous Cid, a mighty warrior who fought sometimes for Alfonso, sometimes for the Moslems, and often

**Spanish
victories**



for himself, and who ruled Valencia at the time he was killed in 1099. The Cid became a hero whose exploits were repeated with embellishments by epic poets, the *Poema del Cid* (c. 1140) being the earliest great masterpiece in Spanish literature. Alfonso's wars also attracted adventurers from France and elsewhere in Europe, many of whom won estates for themselves at the expense of the Moslems. Perhaps the most successful of these adventurers was Henry, a younger brother of the Duke of Burgundy, who was allowed to marry Alfonso's illegiti-

mate daughter (1093) and received as dowry the county of Portugal. Henry's son expanded his inheritance greatly and became the first king of Portugal in 1139. Spanish successes would undoubtedly have been even greater had not the Moslems rallied after their loss of Toledo and secured the aid of the Almoravid dynasty from Morocco (1086). They defeated Alfonso and reunited what was left of Moslem Spain, but they were presently defeated and replaced by fanatical Almohades from Africa (1146). For half a century thereafter the Christians made little progress.

The Normans in Italy and Sicily

Norman adventurers in Italy

William the Conqueror was not the first Norman adventurer to sally forth in quest of a throne, nor were England and Spain the only countries where soldiers of fortune could win fiefs or even kingdoms. Fifty years before the battle of Hastings a group of Norman knights had visited southern Italy on their way back from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and had noted the anarchic conditions prevailing there. At home they spoke enthusiastically of the opportunities offered to mercenary soldiers, and before long, throngs of Norman freebooters were seeking fortunes in Italy. As early as 1029 one such adventurer had acquired the title of count and a small domain near Naples. High among these Norman adventurers stood the numerous sons of a certain Tancred of Hauteville, the first of whom arrived about 1036. By coöperating with local Lombard dukes against the Byzantine Greeks, they soon came to hold so much of Apulia (the "heel" of Italy) that one of them was recognized as count by the emperor, Henry III (1046). In Calabria (the "toe") others were almost as successful.

Robert Guiscard

The most famous of Tancred's sons was Robert Guiscard (c. 1015–1085), a younger half-brother of the others. Soon after succeeding his brother as count in Apulia (1057) he embarked upon an ambitious program of conquest, and by 1071 practically all Italy south of the Papal States was in his hands. At the same time his brother Roger (1031–1101) was engaged in driving the Moslems from Sicily. He entered Messina in 1061, took Palermo in 1072, and completed the conquest in 1091. For some time the two brothers and their heirs kept their domains separate, but in 1127 the two states were amalgamated as the Kingdom of Sicily. This kingdom, ruled by Roger's heirs, was excellently governed for more than a century, and its court at Palermo

became one of the most brilliant in all Europe (see pages 481 and 548).

Southern Italy was not enough to satisfy the soaring ambition of Robert Guiscard. When he began looking around for new worlds to conquer, his eyes fell upon Greece, beyond which lay Constantinople and the Byzantine Empire. Minor Normans in Byzantine service had plotted against their employers, and others had made successful raids into Greece, when a rebellion at Constantinople (1078) convinced Robert that the time for action had come. In 1081 he and his son Bohemond seized the island of Corfu and after a long siege took Durazzo on the mainland. Two major victories enabled them to occupy most of Macedonia and northern Greece. But when the emperor bought Venetian aid with important trade concessions, the Normans were defeated. Upon Robert's death in 1085, the Greek campaign was dropped, but neither the Normans nor the rest of Europe forgot the deerepitude shown by the Byzantine Empire.

**Attack
on the
Byzantine
Empire
(1081)**

The Norman adventurers in Italy were alternately on the best and the worst of terms with the popes. As early as 1053 one pope marched against them with an army, to avenge their raids into the Papal States, but they defeated him and took him prisoner. Six years later, another pope accepted Robert Guiscard as a vassal (1059) and bestowed upon him the title Count of Apulia and Calabria, thus legitimizing after a fashion all that had been done. The same pope formally blessed Roger's proposed conquest of Sicily as a war against infidels. This pope was much under the influence of the man who presently became Gregory VII, and it is easy to see the master's diplomacy in these two moves. A few years later, however, when Gregory was pope himself, he began to worry about the rising strength of his vassal and decided to restrain Robert by stirring up rebellions against him. When Robert retaliated by invading the Papal States, the pope excommunicated him (1078), which bothered the Norman not at all. Two years later the emperor, Henry IV, seeking vengeance for his humiliation at Canossa, invaded Italy with a large army. Gregory speedily forgave Robert, blessed his war against the Greeks, and called upon him for aid. Returning from Greece, Robert took advantage of the invitation to enter Rome and loot the city (1084) but he then withdrew, leaving the pope to face Henry alone. As we have seen, Gregory fled and soon died in exile (1085). Ten years later Gregory's disciple and successor, Urban II, carried the master's imperialistic policies to their ultimate conclusion by launching the First Crusade (1095).

**Robert
and the
popes**

THE FIRST CRUSADE

**Importance
of the
crusades**

The crusades loomed much larger in the history of the Christian world than in that of the Moslems. The latter probably remembered the Christians chiefly as infidel raiders who caused much damage but who could not match the wanton destruction of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. The crusaders certainly exercised less influence upon the course of Near Eastern history than the Norman invaders exercised in the West. But to Europe the crusades were a matter of great import.



They showed many characteristic aspects of the medieval world, but at the same time they encouraged an economic revival which had already begun when the First Crusade was launched and which eventually brought an end to feudalism, the Empire, and the Middle Ages.

For two hundred years before the first crusader took the cross, Christians had been fighting Moslems in Spain, Sicily, and Italy, and adventurers there had sought and found estates or kingdoms for themselves. The Normans had been particularly aggressive, and Robert Guiscard was by no means alone in turning his attention to the East. The crusades may also be regarded as one aspect of the Cluniac movement. Men had long been interested in pilgrimages to famous shrines, such as that at Santiago de Compostela, and during the eleventh century Cluny had often promoted pilgrimages to the Holy Land. While the Moslems did not ordinarily interfere with pilgrims—they were only too glad to get the money the pilgrims brought—many ardent Christians were coming to consider it disgraceful that the Holy Sepulcher should be in the hands of unbelievers. At the same time the crusades greatly advanced the Cluniac ideal of papal supremacy. And finally, the crusades gave an impetus to trade and promoted a money economy, thereby setting in motion forces that eventually revolutionized the economic life of western Europe.

Pope Urban II was born near Rheims about 1042. As a young man he entered the monastery at Cluny, whose spirit he absorbed thoroughly, and he proceeded thence to Rome, where Gregory VII made him a cardinal (1078). Gregory's death (1085) was followed by several months of confusion and one brief papacy, after which Urban became pope in 1088. Throughout his eleven years in office he continued Gregory's policies, including both the general Cluniac reforms and the feud with Henry IV. Gregory had dreamed of a holy war to free Asia Minor from the Seljuk Turks, who had recently occupied most of the peninsula after winning their great victory over the Byzantine emperor at Manzikert (1071). Such a war would not only reopen the way for pilgrims to Jerusalem; it might also force the grateful Byzantine emperor to recognize papal supremacy over the whole church and thereby heal the schism that had separated the Eastern and Western churches since 1054. The quarrel with Henry IV prevented the war, but when conditions became more propitious Urban revived Gregory's scheme.

Early in 1095 Urban attended a church council at Piacenza, in northern Italy, at which an ambassador from the Byzantine emperor

*European
background
of the
crusades*

*Pope
Urban II*

*Urban at
Clermont*

begged aid against the Turks. Urban then crossed the Alps to attend another council at Clermont, in central France. While the assembled bishops were discussing simony and Cluniac reforms, the pope completed his plans for a crusade. When all was ready, on November 27, Urban delivered a powerful appeal, urging the recapture of Jerusalem from the infidels. Even before he had finished speaking the crowd began shouting, "*Deus cult!*"—"God wills it!"—which became the battle cry of the crusaders.

Motives

There can be no doubt that Urban was actuated in part by the purely religious motive of regaining the Holy Sepulcher but, like Gregory before him, he also foresaw other advantages that might flow from the proposed crusade. Urban hoped especially that the crusade might heal the schism and bring the Eastern Church back into communion with Rome on Rome's own terms; it might promote unity in western Europe; and of course the whole enterprise, if successful, would redound to the pope's glory and thereby exalt the Cluniac ideal of papal supremacy. The motives actuating the crusaders themselves were equally varied. There were probably very few, especially in the early days, who had no religious motives at all, but, from the very first, leaders foresaw opportunities to win lands and kingdoms, or at least to loot the fabulously wealthy cities of the Orient.

Organization of the crusade

Before delivering his great speech at Clermont, Urban had prepared careful plans, and during the next several months he was very active in France, encouraging prominent persons to "take the cross." Military leadership was assigned to Raymond of Toulouse, with whom Urban had been in contact before Clermont, but it was also arranged that a papal legate, Bishop Adhemar of Puy, should accompany the crusaders and exercise general supervision. Though no kings volunteered, several great nobles and many younger sons accepted high posts in the army. A majority of the crusaders were French, including Robert of Flanders and Robert of Normandy, Stephen of Blois (whose son later fought for the English throne; see page 445), and the king's brother, Hugh; but there were also Lorrainers, who owed allegiance to Henry IV, and Bohemond, the son of Robert Guiscard. In all there were about three thousand knights and fifteen to twenty thousand infantry. The crusading armies were ordered to march eastward by various routes and assemble at Constantinople in August, 1096.

Peter the Hermit

Urban, like a good general, had planned the crusade as an orderly military advance by trained armies. Before long, however, the agita-

tion got out of hand. Carried away by the enthusiasm that Urban had engendered, unauthorized persons began preaching the crusade to all and sundry, the most famous of these popular preachers being a strange character known as Peter the Hermit. As there had been famines and much distress in France during the two preceding years, Peter easily collected a motley host of about twenty thousand poorly armed and undisciplined peasants. Without waiting for the main armies, this "Peasants' Crusade" started for the East. Its first accomplishment was a series of wild pogroms against Jews living in the Rhine Valley. Why wait until they reached Palestine to start slaughtering unbelievers? As the peasants had brought no food, they pillaged the countryside through which they passed, and local authorities captured and hanged a goodly number of them. When they finally reached Constantinople the Emperor Alexius was dismayed. To keep them from looting the city, he had them ferried across the Bosphorus and sent them on their way, but within a short time all but a few were massacred by the Turks.

Soon after this initial tragedy, the main armies reached Constantinople, where they passed the winter. In 1097 they won important victories over the Turks and crossed Asia Minor. By the time they had captured Antioch, however, the crusaders were quarreling with each other, some had become more anxious to gain kingdoms for themselves than they were to regain the Holy Sepulcher for Christendom, and others had simply gone home. But the crusaders finally entered Jerusalem, on July 15, 1099, butchering huge numbers of Moslems and Jews in their fury.

Two weeks after the fall of Jerusalem, Urban died at Rome, not having heard the glad news. It might have cheered him, but even so he would scarcely have considered the crusade a success, for relations with the Eastern Church were more strained than ever. Urban apparently had reached some sort of friendly understanding with the Byzantine emperor (Alexius), perhaps before Clermont or possibly while the armies were at Constantinople, but the greed of the crusaders ruined everything. Bohemond was the most troublesome, for he insisted upon keeping Antioch for himself though it had been specifically promised to Alexius. As a result of this treaty violation, Alexius and Bohemond were at war, off and on, until Bohemond's death in 1111, and Alexius refused to discuss church union until he got the city that had been promised him. By stirring up a war allegedly for idealistic ends, Urban had let loose passions which obliterated all idealism.

**Capture of
Jerusalem**

**Urban's
disappoint-
ment**

Urban's crusaders captured Jerusalem, to be sure, but in its larger aspects and in the long run the crusade was a failure.

**Latin states
in the East**

Idealistic leaders of the crusade had sometimes dreamed of founding a theocratic state in Palestine, to be governed directly or indirectly by the pope. Such a scheme was quite impractical, and the military leaders hastened to set up their own states (see map, page 339). The Kingdom of Jerusalem was ruled by Godfrey of Bouillon and, after his death in 1100, by his brother Baldwin, both of Lorraine. They had theoretical control over the other principalities, but actually Bohemond, and later his son Tancred, ruled Antioch, Raymond of Toulouse ruled Tripoli, and a cousin of Baldwin ruled Edessa. Feudalism being the only form of government with which they were familiar, it was quite natural that the crusaders should try to organize their states along feudal lines. Many years later lawyers drew up a document, called the Assize of Jerusalem, which purported to be a set of laws for the new kingdom. It pictures a perfect feudal state, but this feudal Utopia was never actualized.

**Failure of
feudalism
in the East**

Feudalism could not be set up in Syria and Palestine as it had been in England by William the Conqueror or in eastern Germany and Spain by others. It could not even be adapted to Sicilian conditions, and the Norman rulers in Sicily made little effort to establish it. As we have seen, the whole feudal system rested on the manor, and there were no manors in Palestine or Sicily. On the other hand, both these regions enjoyed a money economy that was all but unknown in the feudal West. The absence of manors left the feudal pyramid hanging in mid-air, and money payments enabled leaders to secure the services of others without going through the formalities of homage and investiture. Like their Moslem predecessors, the new rulers of Palestine collected taxes in cash from the peasants, and with this money they hired Armenians and other mercenaries. The most that they could do for their vassals was to allow them to collect and keep the taxes of some locality, but as they thereby reduced their own incomes and the number of mercenaries they could hire, such grants were not favored. In this way and in others, the crusades taught Europeans much about the advantages of the money economy that was then slowly reappearing in the West. The days of old-fashioned feudalism in Europe were numbered, and the First Crusade may be taken as marking the end of one period in medieval history and the beginning of another. Other crusades were to follow during the next two hundred years, but none ever equaled this First Crusade in importance.

X

Cloth Hall, Ypres (*Exing Galloway*)



TOWNS AND NATIONAL STATES

MEDIEVAL COMMERCE—
EMPIRE AND NATIONAL MONARCHY

Italy and Papacy		Germany		England		France		Orient	
697	First dage of Venice	962	Haly Raman Empire			987	Hugh Capet		
1000	Venice Queen of Adriatic								
1015	Genoa and Pisa expel Maslems from Sardinia								
1050-1100	Lambord com-munes		Flemish towns						
1062	Pisans toke Palermo			1066	Narman Canquest				
1096-1099	First Crusade			1154-1189	Henry II			1054	Schism af East and West
1154-1159	Pape Adrian IV	1152-1190	Frederick I Barbarassa					1096-1099	First Crusade
1167	Lambord League								
1176	Battle of Legnona								
1198-1216	Innocent III	1215-1250	Frederick II	1199-1216	King Jahn	1180-1223	Philip Augustus		
				1215	Magna Carta	1226-1270	Louis IX	1204	Fourth Crusade
1243-1254	Innacent IV	1254-1273	Interregnum					d. 1227	Genghis Khon
1266-1285	Charles af Anjou	1273-1291	Rudalph af Hapsburg	1265	Mantfort's Parliament			1236-1250	Recanquest In Spain
				1272-1307	Edward I			1261	Byzantines expel Crusaders
1282	Sicilion Vespers								
1294-1303	Baniface VIII	1291	Swiss Canfederation	1295	Model Parliament	1302	First Estates-General	1291	Fall af Acre

27. MEDIEVAL COMMERCE

THE barbarian raids into western Europe were largely over by 950 and peace slowly brought better times. This return of economic prosperity was heralded, as usual, by a rising population. The barbarians had butchered countless persons, and still more had died as a result of the widespread devastation. As the raiders burned houses and barns, destroyed or drove off all the cattle, and saved no seed for the next year's crop, they uniformly left famine, starvation, and pestilence in their wake. Hosts of young children died of diseases caused or aggravated by exposure and undernourishment. The return of peace eased these conditions, more children grew up to raise families of their own, and western Europe's population grew cumulatively. Reliable statistics are not available, but modern estimates indicate that the increase in population during the eleventh and twelfth centuries approximated 15 percent.

This increasing surplus population, ever pressing upon the available supplies of land and food, forced fundamental changes in the economic life of Europe. We have already seen how the younger sons of the nobility, deprived of all inheritance by the laws of primogeniture, often sought careers and estates for themselves at the expense of pagans or Moslems in central Europe, Spain, Sicily, or Palestine. At the same time humbler persons were acquiring new lands in other ways which, though less spectacular and less honorific, were more valuable to society as a whole. They cleared forests, drained swamps, and built dikes to reclaim land from the sea. Leadership in such enterprises fell to the monks of a new order (the Cistercians, founded in 1098), who often located their monasteries in remote places and who soon learned to be excellent farmers. Countless lay-

*Increasing
population
after 1200*

*More food
and farm
land
needed*

men followed their example, and throughout the twelfth century the cultivated area of Europe increased steadily.

**Feudalism
weakened**

These developments exercised a profound influence upon the feudal system. Serfs must now receive more consideration, or they would escape to the new regions where lands could be held in free tenure rather than servile. New incentives to work, more efficient organization, and better farming methods increased the yield per acre on the old manors. As Europe's food supply rose more rapidly than her farming population, a surplus appeared above what could be consumed on the manor and an increasing number of people found it possible to devote their entire time and energy to activities other than agriculture. Enterprising persons turned to commerce and industry, and town life reappeared in western Europe.

THE REVIVAL OF COMMERCE

**Trade
during the
Dark Ages**

Trade between the East and the West had declined steadily ever since the third century and it virtually ceased after the Moslem conquests in the seventh and eighth. The western Mediterranean being closed to Christian traders, western Europe was forced to rely upon itself, and the commercial stagnation of the early feudal period ensued. Nevertheless, local trade never died out completely. There were still occasional market days on which the peasants of a locality acquired such necessities as salt while the aristocracy purchased a few luxuries from peddlers. Syrian and Jewish merchants continued to bring small consignments of spices and fine cloths from the Orient by way of Spain. In the eleventh century, however, trade began to take on larger proportions.

Venice

Venice led in the commercial revival. That famous city, built on small islands in the lagoons along the shore of the northern Adriatic, had been founded by refugees fleeing from the Huns in the fifth century, and later it was expanded by others fleeing from the Lombards. These early Venetians presently achieved a modest prosperity by exchanging salt and fish for grain and vegetables in the nearby villages on the Italian mainland. They thus developed their commercial talents from the very first. When the Lombards captured the Byzantine capital at Ravenna (751) and Pepin gave it to the pope,

SAN MARCO, VENICE. The Byzantine architecture of St. Mark's cathedral in Venice, erected in the eleventh century, reflects the strong commercial ties between Venice and Constantinople. (Galloway)



the Venetians inherited the tenuous eastern trade of that city. Charlemagne recognized the Byzantine emperor's vague claims to the city in 812, and even during the lowest period of the depression Venetian merchants continued to trade with the East. They imported various luxury articles from the East and paid for them, it is to be feared, chiefly with German and Slavic slaves.

**Her
commercial
empire**

The Byzantine "duke" of Venice had been replaced by an elected "doge" as ruler of the city (697), and Venice remained an aristocratic republic for more than a thousand years. Venetian traders then acquired the alleged bones of St. Mark in Alexandria (829) thereby bringing high prestige to their city. After the non-Venetian pirates had been driven from their lairs along the Dalmatian coast (1000), Venice proudly proclaimed herself "Queen of the Adriatic." In the eleventh century Norman adventurers seized the few remaining Byzantine outposts in southern Italy (notably Amalfi, Salerno, and Bari) leaving Venice with a virtual monopoly on oriental trade. A few years later the Byzantine emperor (Alexius) was forced to buy Venetian aid against Robert Guiscard, paying for it with wide trading privileges in all parts of his empire (see page 449). Meantime, to secure adequate supplies of food and markets for their oriental goods, the Venetians were building up a commercial empire in northern Italy. At the time of the First Crusade, therefore, Venice was a prosperous and powerful city, possessed of a considerable fleet and prepared to exploit whatever commercial opportunities might arise.

**Genoa
and Pisa**

Venice soon encountered two major rivals for the Mediterranean trade, Genoa and Pisa. Located on the western side of Italy, these two cities were forced to drive the Moslems from the Tyrrhenian Sea before they could send ships to the Orient. They jointly reconquered Sardinia in 1015 and they raided North Africa as early as 1030. Thirty years later, in 1062, the Pisan fleet inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Moslems at Palermo, in Sicily, and part of the loot from this expedition was used to pay for their cathedral—with its famous Leaning Tower hard by. A few years later the Norman conquest of Sicily completed the liberation of the Tyrrhenian Sea, leaving Pisa and Genoa free to become bitter rivals for its control. Such they remained for many years, but at the same time they were engaged in a mighty struggle with Venice for maritime supremacy in the Mediterranean.

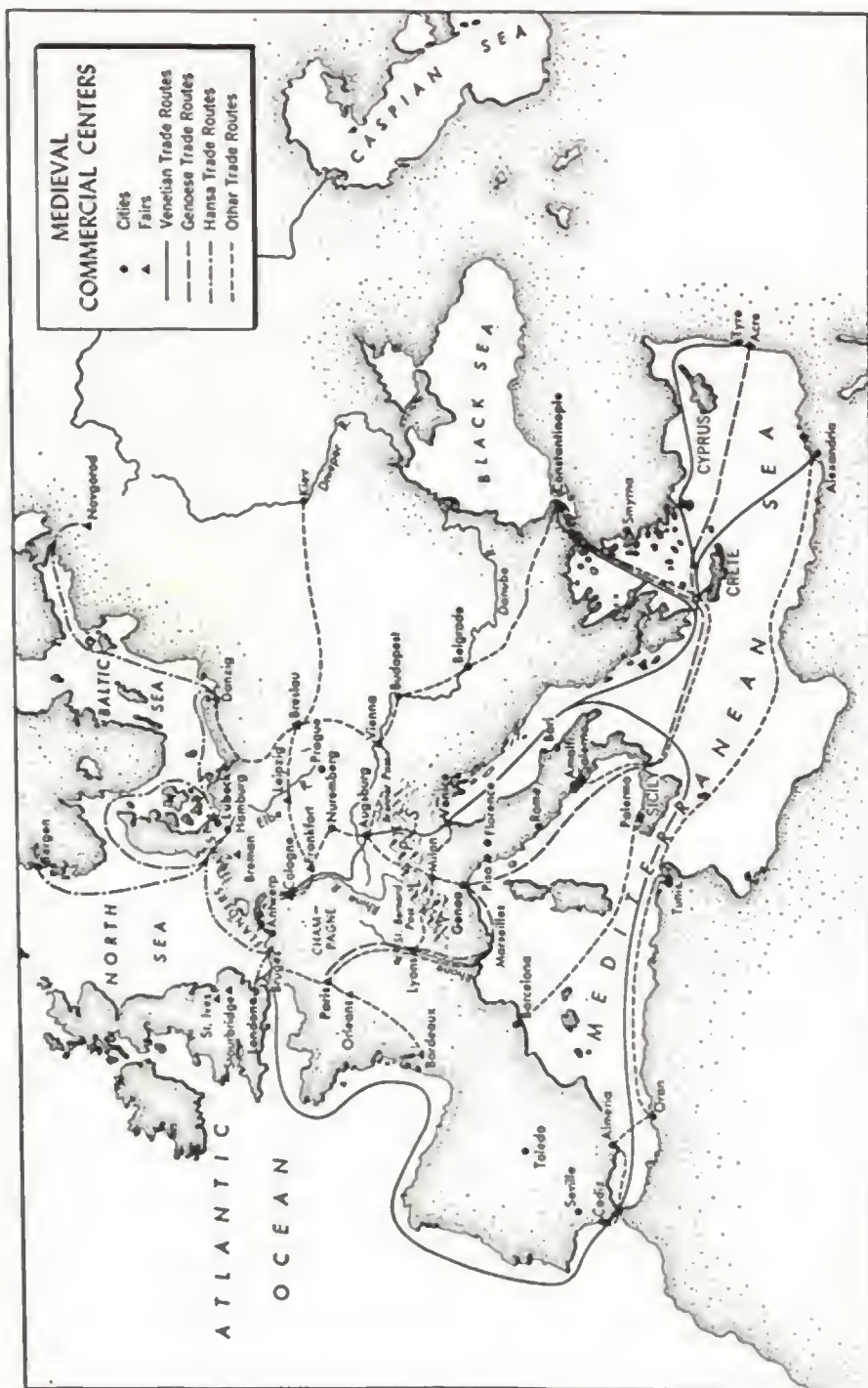
**Trade in
northern
Europe**

A second great center of trade in the eleventh century lay along the shores of the North Sea, especially in Flanders. The early Norse invaders of England and France had been pirates, but the refining



CATHEDRAL, PISA. (Galloway)

influence of civilization presently taught them the superior merits of trade. The first to make the change were the Varangians, who in the tenth century followed the trade route from Sweden through Kiev to Constantinople (see page 336). Their cousins in the West promptly followed their example, and the economic foundation of the short-lived empire of Canute (1016-1035; see page 443) was commercial rather than piratical. Several seaports between Hamburg and London attained prominence and prosperity in the eleventh century, the most important of them being Bruges, now in Belgium. Their strategic location enabled Flemish merchants to navigate the Rhine and other rivers, cross the sea to England, or follow the coast to German ports.



On the eve of the First Crusade their trade rivaled that of northern Italy.

This early commerce was largely water-borne, for the roads of western Europe were in execrable condition. As they were unfit for wagons, overland trade was limited to articles of small bulk that could be loaded on pack animals. Local lords frequently levied tolls on merchant caravans, thus refining their ancient brigandage, but no one pretended that this tribute was for improving the roads. Sometimes, however, a lord would try to prevent other brigands from robbing the merchants who paid him tolls—or at least from robbing them in the immediate vicinity of his toll gate. When roads and bridges were improved, it was done by the merchants themselves or, at a later period, by the kings.

*Poor roads
and many
toll gates*

The eleventh century also saw marked progress in shipbuilding. The boats on the northern rivers were still small craft propelled by oars, but in some cases rather large flat-bottomed scows were used to transport bulky merchandise such as grain. The Italians, especially the Genoese, were learning to build much larger sea-going galleys, provided with both oars and sails and having two or perhaps even three decks and a cabin. Galleys of this sort carried crusaders and their horses to Palestine in considerable numbers.

*Improved
ships*

Money

Commerce could not make great advance until coined money became more readily available than it had been in the Dark Ages. Western Europe had drained its supply of the precious metals in the last centuries of the Roman Empire by exporting money rather than goods to pay for its imports from the East. The Merovingian kings were still able to cast a few gold and silver coins in the Roman style, but Charlemagne could not continue the practice. He therefore introduced a new system of money, minting only small silver coins. His new coin, called a denarius, was about the size of an American dime. No larger coins were cast, but in speaking of large sums, twelve denarii were called a solidus and twenty solidi made a libra (pound): 240 silver denarii actually weighed about one Roman pound. This system of coinage spread to all western Europe and was taken by the Normans to England, where it still is used: twelve British pence (abbreviated *d.* for *denarius*) make a shilling (*s.* for *solidus*), and twenty shillings make a pound (*£* for *libra*). The fact that the denarius, or

*Charle-
magne's
silver coins*

penny, and the half-denarius were the only coins actually struck shows how slight was the use of money in those dark days.

**Monetary
confusion**

During the next few centuries the money of Europe fell into great confusion. Only in Norman England did the king retain a monopoly on the casting of coins. In France about 300 separate nobles are said to have usurped the right under the early Capetians, and thirty of them retained it until after 1300. As both kings and nobles were constantly debasing their coins by adding copper or other base metals to the silver, and as no two proceeded at the same pace in their depredations, merchants had to know hundreds of issues of coins, all of them having different intrinsic values. Late in the twelfth century the Venetians tried to bring order to this chaos by introducing new coins. These were quickly imitated throughout Europe, but before long they met the fate of their Carolingian predecessors. Conditions were made still more difficult by the fact that there never were enough coins to meet the needs of growing commerce. Western Europe lacked adequate supplies of silver, and not until the thirteenth century did the opening of new mines relieve this shortage.

**Florins
and ducats**

In the eleventh century Western traders began importing gold coins from Constantinople. Sometimes they reckoned large values in terms of these gold "besants," but not until the thirteenth century did Europeans cast gold coins of their own. Then the Venetian ducat and Florentine florin, being of more stable value and better adapted to large transactions, quickly replaced the earlier coinage. The metallic value of each was slightly over two dollars. Silver denarii were used thereafter principally as small change.

Industry

Textiles

The most important prerequisite to extensive commerce in western Europe was an industry able to produce goods in general demand. As long as the manorial system monopolized the economic life of the West, such products were not available. In the eleventh century, however, the textile industries began to develop in both Italy and Flanders. The hills of Tuscany provided ample pasturage for sheep, and weavers at Florence began the manufacture of woolen cloth, upon which the later wealth of the city was founded. A little later nearby Lucca became famous for her silks, the raw materials for which were brought from the Orient on Pisan ships. In the north, Flemish weavers were producing superior woolen cloth on a large

scale. The demand for these cloths became so great that more wool was needed than Flanders could produce. Flemish merchants therefore began importing wool from England, and for several centuries thereafter both countries prospered from this transmarine commerce.

The cloth woven in these industrial centers was not an expensive luxury for the rich but a commodity desired by all classes of society. Moreover, even the peasants were now in a position to buy it. The introduction of a money economy, and the production of food above what was consumed on the manor, opened up vast markets to weavers and cloth merchants. The peasant sold his surplus crop for cash to a merchant who carried it to one of the new towns that were then beginning to appear. With the money gained from this sale, the peasant bought cloth and other articles from traveling peddlers. Even in the twelfth century a few enterprising men made what in those days seemed large fortunes because they discovered that it was possible to sell manufactured goods to the inhabitants of villages as well as to those who dwelt in manor houses.

**New
markets**

THE REVIVAL OF TOWNS

This revival of trade led to the reappearance of urban life in western Europe. In the early feudal period towns and cities had virtually ceased to exist as centers of trade and industry. In time of raids their Roman walls were a useful protection, and were therefore kept in repair, but in time of peace these "burgs" or "boroughs" often resembled our Western "ghost towns." In Italy, however, the nobility sometimes continued to live with their retainers in such towns, which thus preserved something of their past glory, but economically and politically they resembled feudal castles rather than Roman cities. In northern Europe the bishops usually resided in towns, where they sometimes maintained monasteries and schools for the clergy. Occasionally a bishop might rule a town with a thousand or more inhabitants. Though the courts of kings and emperors followed the rulers in their restless migrations from one castle to another—it was easier and cheaper to take the court to food than to bring the food to court—still a few ancient cities were used as permanent centers of administration. None of these towns, however, enjoyed great importance in the economic life of the day.

**Towns
during the
Dark Ages**

The revival of commerce brought new life to many burgs. As the configuration of the land often led merchants and traders to follow

**Burgs and
faubourgs**

the old Roman trade routes, places that had risen to prominence in antiquity because of harbors, fords, crossroads, or other natural advantages now rose again. A burg or castle made a place attractive to merchants, not only because of the prospective customers assembled there, but also because of the protection it afforded. As local lords often charged fees for entering the walls, the merchants might set up their stalls just outside the gates; in case they prospered, they might build warehouses and homes there; and for defense they would surround their buildings with walls or palisades. The area thus enclosed came to be known as the *faubourg*—still the French word for “suburb”—from the Latin *foris burgum*, “outside the burg.” From these burgs and faubourgs grew the medieval towns.

**Towns as
industrial
centers**

It was not long until artisans began flocking to the centers where tradesmen had their warehouses. In earlier times weaving and other trades had been conducted by the peasants in their cottages on the manors. Now it became more convenient for artisans to move to a town. Here they could easily procure raw materials—such as the wool brought from England to Flanders or the silk brought from the Orient to Lucca—and here they could dispose of their products with equal ease.

**Food
problems**

The great influx of artisans to the cities made food problems difficult. Many artisans, being former peasants themselves, knew how to grow much of their food in garden plots near the town, but they never had time to produce enough. Merchants therefore began buying food on the manors and transporting it to the cities. These new markets, supplemented by rising prices, encouraged lords and peasants to produce more food, but the process of creating a surplus was a slow one. In early times, therefore, towns were limited to regions of great natural fertility, like northern Italy, or places such as Flanders where excellent facilities for water transportation made it feasible to import considerable quantities of grain and other bulky foods from a distance.

**Markets
and fairs**

In the early Middle Ages there were village markets at which peasants and peddlers traded commodities with each other, but market days were few and far between. The new towns held markets nearly every day, where artisans sold their products to traveling merchants and the merchants sold goods to their ultimate consumers. At this time, too, there first appeared great fairs which lasted for several days or perhaps even for weeks every year. The more famous fairs, such as those in the Champagne district of eastern France or the one

at Stourbridge near Cambridge in England, were frequented by crowds of merchants from all parts of western Europe. Here transactions were largely wholesale, great merchants bringing large consignments of goods from distant places and selling them to the local merchants and peddlers, who later disposed of them in the town and village markets.

Town Charters

A medieval town was more than a collection of people and houses: it was a political unit as well. At first the feudal lords and higher clergy showed strong opposition to the merchants, who did not fit easily into the existing social system and who were constantly demanding "liberties" that seemed to weaken or undermine that system. Presently, however, enlightened lords began to see alluring possibilities of profit from prosperous towns and offered various elementary liberties—legal, economic, social—to persons who would settle in those they founded. These liberties were set forth in a formal charter, but the town remained under the rule of the lord and was regarded by higher authorities as a part of his fief.

**Lords and
charters**

Many merchants, finding such limited freedom inadequate, began to organize free and self-governing "communes." These communes, too, had their charters. Sometimes the charters were bought from a king or lord by the townsmen, sometimes they were the free gift of the king or lord, and sometimes they were won by revolution. Such charters guaranteed ampler liberties than those in other towns, and they granted citizens the right of being governed by their own elected officials. The Italian communes, in remembrance of ancient Rome, sometimes called the ruler a consul, but more commonly they simply called him a *podesta*; in Flanders, France, and Germany various titles were used; and the English spoke of a mayor and aldermen. To fit the communes into the feudal system, lawyers endowed them with a fictitious personality and regarded the corporation as a vassal of the king. Thus in England the mayors of the more important towns, such as London, were called lord mayors, and the man who happened to be mayor was ranked as one of the nobility of the realm during his term in office.

Communes

The charters extended many liberties beside self-government to the towns and communes. In the first place, all citizens were "free"—free, that is, to come and go as they pleased. Many citizens were

**Communal
liberties**

runaway serfs, but if they managed to stay unchallenged in a town for a year and a day, their former lord could not compel them to return to his manor. "Town air makes men free," they used to say. The citizen was also exempted from feudal dues and services, and he held the land on which his town house was built under a special tenure—called "burgage tenure" in England—which permitted him to sell it or leave it by will whenever he wished. Moreover, merchants were highly dissatisfied with the prevailing feudal law, which, being the law of an agrarian society, did not adequately cover commercial matters, and they complained that litigation in feudal courts was slow, uncertain, and expensive. The charters therefore set up special courts in the communes. The Italian communes revived Roman law in the twelfth century, but in the north these communal courts gradually developed a new system of commercial law—called "law merchant" in England—that was recognized by merchants everywhere. Local defense was also left to the communal government, and citizens therefore owed no military service to a feudal overlord.

**Communal
independ-
ence in
Italy**

As no strong monarchy existed in Italy in the eleventh century, the communes of Lombardy and Tuscany recognized only a vague allegiance to the local nobility from whom they had derived their charters. These communes therefore became virtually independent states, controlling not merely the territory within their city walls but also the fields and farms for several miles around. They thus came to resemble the "city-states" of ancient Greece and Rome, and the nobles eventually learned that their interests were identical with those of the commune. The communes fought each other in frequent wars that were sometimes aggravated by the feuds of the old nobility but usually were caused by commercial rivalry.

**The Hansa
in northern
Europe**

Kings and feudal lords were more powerful in the north, but they too learned that it was best to let the communes have a relatively free hand. There was little warfare of the Italian sort between northern communes, and the towns did much to promote the economic and political unity of Flanders, France, and England. The north German communes had no strong government over them, but at an early date they united in a league known as the Hansa. It became prominent in the thirteenth century and reached the zenith of its power in the fourteenth, when about seventy-five cities were united under the leadership of Liibeck. The merchants of these cities did business and maintained posts in ports as far apart as London and Bruges in the West and Novgorod in Russia. Their establishment at London, called

the Steelyard, can be traced back at least to 1157; their ships carried much of England's wool exports to Flanders; and the money used by these "Easterlings," based on the "pound sterling," was preferred in England because of its stability. Though the Hansa had no great military power, it drove pirates from the North Sea, and it performed a great service to merchants everywhere by its contributions to maritime law and commercial practice.

THE MEDIEVAL COMMERCIAL SYSTEM

This revival of trade and town life began rather early in the eleventh century, many years before Pope Urban II started preaching the First Crusade, but when the crusaders left for the East in 1096 commerce was still a rather puny development. Therefore it cannot be said that commerce caused the First Crusade or, vice versa, that the crusade originated commerce, yet the two developments were closely connected. If we must have a short and simple explanation of their connection, it might be best to say that, after the ravages of the barbarian inroads were over, the peoples of Europe suddenly showed a new energy that led to an increasing population and to a new exuberance in all aspects of life. It caused men to embark upon crusades, to revive commerce, and in general to manifest a new spirit of adventure and enterprise. Appearing at approximately the same time, each of these various manifestations of returning vigor was influenced by the others, and each in its turn encouraged the others.

Though the First Crusade did not cause the commercial revival, it nevertheless encouraged trade. Tens of thousands of crusaders left their homes to visit lands of which they had scarcely heard and in which they found luxuries of whose existence they had never dreamed. They suddenly discovered that there was a better life than that afforded by an early medieval manor, and when they reached home again they wished to continue enjoying the luxuries of which they had learned. New markets were thus created, and fortunes awaited the men who could supply them with goods. Some of these goods came from the Orient, it is true, but the greater part of them could be manufactured as well and more cheaply in Europe. In ways such as this, therefore, the crusades gave a great impetus to European trade and industry.

*New vigor
in Europe*

*Trade
stimulated
by crusades*

**Growth of
shipping**

It is easy to mark western Europe's economic progress between one crusade and the next. The main armies of the First Crusade marched overland through Constantinople to Palestine because the combined shipping of the West could not transport an army of 25,000 persons. Within a year or two, however, Genoese ships were busily carrying supplies and reinforcements to the crusaders at Antioch, and, even before the capture of Jerusalem, Genoese merchants had established themselves in several coastal cities, where they did business with Christians and Moslems on equal terms. After the fighting was over, the new Latin states of Syria depended upon the West for munitions and armor, and pilgrims flocked to the Holy Land in increasing numbers, usually making the trip by sea. In the Second Crusade (1147) the German troops were transported from Constantinople to Acre in Palestine by ship and the French sailed from southern Asia Minor to Antioch. During the Third Crusade (1189) European shipping was able to carry the French and English armies from Marseilles and Genoa to Acre. At the beginning of the Fourth Crusade (1202-1204) the Venetians provided ships for a force of 35,000 men and 4500 horses, whom they successfully diverted from Palestine to Constantinople and whom they inspired to capture the Byzantine capital (see page 339). For more than fifty years thereafter Venetians dominated Constantinople, and after they were driven out (1261) the emperor depended greatly on Genoese aid. When we come to the later crusades we find it quite impossible to disentangle their economic, imperialistic, and religious motives, yet the Italian cities prospered mightily because of them.

**Economic
prosperity**

Commercial and industrial progress continued unabated through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It brought an economic prosperity to support the brilliant civilization of the thirteenth century, which is usually taken as the high point of medieval times. After 1300, however, further economic changes began to undermine this new cultural system, and we shall see that in general the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries present a rather different picture.

*Trade Routes and Markets***Italian
traders in
the Orient**

The governments of Venice and Genoa were deeply interested in oriental trade, which they encouraged and protected, but local trade was left largely to individual initiative. The great sea-going galleys were owned and operated by the state, which rented out space in

them to private merchants. Sailing in fleets and convoyed by warships, the galleys made one round trip a year to the Orient, with each fleet directed to a distant port but stopping perhaps at others along the way. Each Italian city monopolized, or tried to monopolize, the trade at certain eastern ports—the Genoese at Acre, for example, and the Venetians at Tyre as well as in Greece, Crete, and several Aegean islands. The Venetians traded at Constantinople until 1261, but thereafter the Genoese dominated trade in the Byzantine capital. During their stay in the Orient, the merchants resided in a fortified quarter of the city, called the *fondaco* or “factory,” which was reserved for them and governed by an Italian official known as the “consul.” (Modern governments still maintain agents with this title in foreign ports to look after the commercial and other interests of their nationals.) Adventurous traders often left the “factories,” however, and sometimes they penetrated far inland on their private trading expeditions.

The Italians were not content merely to bring the spices, sugar, and rich fabrics of the East to Italy. They also developed markets for these goods throughout the West. Genoese ships frequented the ports of the western Mediterranean, and Genoese traders ascended the Rhone from Marseilles to visit the great fairs of eastern France and Belgium. Venetians and Germans, on the other hand, carried goods from Venice across the Brenner Pass and down the Rhine to Flanders. The Venetians also sent ships to the West by way of the Atlantic, and before the end of the thirteenth century they thus reached England and Flanders. Here they exchanged their spices for woolen cloth, which was finished and dyed in Italy before it was exported to the East.

*Italians
in the West*

Meantime the northern trade centers were prospering equally with the Italian. Flemish cloth, made of English wool, was exported to Germany and even to Russia, and countless other commodities were handled by northern traders. Large quantities of French wine went to England to pay for the wool. The church forbade Christians to eat meat on Fridays or other fast days, thereby creating a great demand for fish, and fishing in the North Sea became a major industry. As the fish were salted and shipped in barrels, there was always a great demand for salt. Ships required special lumber, particularly for masts, and made great use of pitch and other naval stores produced in northern countries such as Norway. Furs were another important item in northern trade.

*Trade in
northern
Europe*

*Merchant and Craft Guilds***Early
guilds**

In the early days of the trade revival, merchants found it necessary to travel together in companies and to hire armed guards for their caravans. It was for this purpose, apparently, that they first entered into associations called "guilds." A little later the guilds secured charters for towns and communes. As the liberties and local administration of the town were entrusted to the men who had secured the charter, or to their successors, the merchant guilds came to enjoy great importance. Not everyone residing in a town was a member of the guild, however, and gradually the guildsmen came to form a narrow aristocracy that governed the town and regulated trade in its own interest.

**Guild
regulations**

Guild regulation of business was based on the theory that all guildsmen should enjoy equal opportunities. Strict rules therefore forbade practices which might give one member an advantage over his fellows. Thus every guildsman was entitled to buy his share of whatever goods were offered for sale in the local market; none could buy except in the open market; and attempts to corner the market or otherwise secure a monopoly were severely punished. A great deal was said by merchants, as well as by theologians and lawyers, about the "just price," which the guild enforced by fining or even beating anyone who sold at prices lower than those declared by the guild to be "just." Such talk shows the weakness of medieval economic theorizing, for then as now there was no impartial way of determining exactly what the "just price" of a given article might be. Actually, the "just price" was whatever guildsmen thought they could get. At the same time, guildsmen made every effort to prevent other merchants from profiting by their market. Traders from other towns might not sell goods of which local merchants had a supply, nor could they transport needed goods through the town without offering them for sale.

**Craft
guilds**

In the twelfth century the merchant guilds included both merchants and artisans, partly because of their small numbers and partly because many individuals were both the makers and the salesmen of their products. A hundred years later there were so many guildsmen that it became convenient for them to organize along different lines. "Craft guilds" then replaced "merchant guilds." The new organizations each drew their members from only one specific industry, with

separate guilds set up in each town for weavers, dyers, shoemakers, and so forth. These guildsmen were primarily artisans, but they also sold their products, and the regulation of industry fell into their hands.

The craft guilds had elaborate rules about training new members. First of all, a youth served for several years—usually seven—learning the trade as an apprentice in the house of a guildsman. During these years he was fed, clothed, and disciplined by his master, but he received no wages beyond a little pocket money. After completing this term of service, he became a journeyman—so called because he worked for others by the day (French *ournée*). For several years the journeyman worked as a hired laborer, but if he was industrious, saved his money, and showed skill in his craft, he might become a master workman with a shop of his own. In early times nearly every apprentice could reasonably look forward to becoming a master, but during the thirteenth century it became increasingly difficult to advance beyond the stage of journeyman. Industry was controlled by businessmen, who paid cash wages to journeymen, and there was little place for the old-fashioned master who fabricated and sold the product. It is said that, about 1350, some two hundred master weavers in Florence controlled an industry employing thirty thousand journeymen.

**Masters,
journeymen,
apprentices**

Romantic writers have sometimes pictured these medieval guilds in very rosy colors, suggesting that they concerned themselves primarily with maintaining high standards of workmanship and protecting the general public against inferior or shoddy goods. There can be no doubt that artisans often took pride in their work, and that their professional idealism sometimes found expression in guild rules, but in general their regulation of trade was designed to promote their own selfish interests. Regulations protecting the interests of the consumer often had to be forced upon the guild by municipal or royal authority. Moreover, the guild's elaborate codes regarding methods of manufacture may have been good at the time they were drawn up, but their very rigidity prevented industrial progress. Medieval guildsmen, like nearly everybody else in the Middle Ages, wished the world, society, and industry to be static rather than progressive. What they desired above all else was stability, and they shaped their rules accordingly. Industry could not progress rapidly until the guild system had been smashed, and those countries in which the guilds were weakest made the most rapid industrial progress.

**Idealism
of the
guilds**

Credit and Banking

**Lack of
adequate
capital**

The revival of commerce was greatly impeded, in its early years, by a lack of adequate capital and of financial credit. Wool bought in England was shipped to Flanders, where it was spun and woven, and the cloth was sold somewhere else. How was a merchant to pay cash for this wool when the cloth would not reach the consumer for several months, or perhaps even for a year or two? Under the feudal system rich men, who had their wealth in land, had no money to lend to the traders, even if they were inclined to do so, and at the same time the church resolutely forbade loans at interest or, as was said in those days, at usury.

**Church ban
against
usury**

The attitude of the church in this matter is not hard to understand. Under the simple agricultural economy of the early Middle Ages, men borrowed only to buy food in time of famine. Exactng interest under such circumstances seemed an exceptionally hard-hearted way of exploiting the misfortunes of the needy, the more so as the lenders usually were monasteries which had grown rich from the free gifts of the very people who now sought their aid. The church therefore forbade all interest. In later times commercial loans fell under the ban because the church would not distinguish between charitable loans to a starving man and commercial loans to a rich merchant who borrowed merely in order to become still richer. The demand for loans was so great, however, and merchants were so glad to pay 10 to 16 percent interest if necessary, that money was lent in constantly increasing amounts. Lenders with delicate consciences invented ingenious subterfuges to avoid the sin of "usury," but others simply disregarded all ecclesiastical thunders.

**New
financial
methods**

When borrowed capital became more easily available and commercial enterprises grew in magnitude, many new financial procedures were devised. One such invention was the joint-stock company. A number of men would pool their resources to buy goods and hire an agent to sell them in another market, after which they would distribute the profits among themselves. In addition to making possible larger undertakings such a plan provided a sort of insurance, since all the company's assets would not be tied up in one venture and lost in case of shipwreck or attack by pirates or highwaymen. To avoid shipping coins from one city to another, these early businessmen also invented letters of credit and checks. Large commercial houses, with

dozens of employees and with enterprises in several cities, had need of elaborate systems of bookkeeping and records. And as merchants required an education very different from that provided by the monasteries, new schools began to teach these new practical subjects to laymen (see page 555).

The first men to make commercial loans probably were rich merchants who had accumulated more capital than they could use themselves, or who, having retired from active trade, found this way to enjoy an income from their savings. Before long, however, specialized bankers arose in Italy, and the thirteenth century saw these "Lombards" doing business in every part of western Europe. To the present day the financial district of London, corresponding to Wall Street in New York, is called "Lombard Street." These Italian bankers lent money, charged usury, received deposits, issued letters of credit, and transferred credit from one man to another. In fact, they performed so many of the functions of a modern bank that their services became indispensable, not only to businessmen but even to kings and popes.

Bankers

Though most of the early traders and artisans who inhabited the towns were serfs whom overcrowding or a distaste for agrarian life had caused to forsake their manors, they soon came to be recognized as a special class of society known as the *bourgeoisie*. In the thirteenth century, less than one-tenth of the population of western Europe belonged to this social class, but its importance was already out of all proportion to its numbers. At first the bourgeoisie accepted most of the conventions and ideals of feudal society, they "thought feudally," and the more successful of them could imagine no greater glory than associating freely with the feudal aristocracy. Such grandeur was not easily achieved, though a rich burgher might occasionally become the proud father-in-law of an impecunious nobleman. As their power and importance increased, however, the bourgeoisie ceased to feel subservient and the older social classes began to accept bourgeois ideas as to the good life. The various activities of these new citizens—their money economy, their mobility, and their talk about freedom—eventually produced profound changes in feudal society, in agricultural methods and the agrarian aristocracy, in the governments, and even in the church.

**A new
social
class**

28. EMPIRE AND NATIONAL MONARCHY

**Guelphs
and
Ghibellines**

MEANTIME political developments too were changing the face of Europe. The extinction of the Salian line of Holy Roman emperors, with the death of Henry V in 1125 (see page 438), precipitated a long struggle. As Henry left no direct heir, the electors were forced to seek an emperor in another family, and as their chief concern was to escape having a ruler strong enough to curb their own feudal liberties, they chose a certain Lothair, related to the Welf family of Bavaria. Upon Lothair's death (1137) they elected as his successor Conrad II (1138-1152), a member of the Hohenstaufen family of Swabia who, through his mother, was a grandson of Henry IV. For many years thereafter these two families remained rivals, with the Hohenstaufens holding the office of emperor while the Welfs led the feudal opposition. When the Hohenstaufen emperors revived Henry's ancient controversy with the papacy, the Welfs quickly allied themselves with the ecclesiastical powers in Germany. The rivalry soon spread to Italy, where the name Welf was softened to Guelph while Hohenstaufen partisans came to be called Ghibellines. For many years thereafter the Guelphs of Italy supported the papacy while their Ghibelline rivals favored the emperors.

Frederick Barbarossa

**Emperor
Frederick I**

Lothair and Conrad were not outstanding men, but Conrad's nephew and successor, Frederick I (1152-1190), sometimes known as Frederick Barbarossa because of his red beard, was one of the great emperors of the Middle Ages. Frederick and his lawyers formulated a



new theory for the Holy Roman Empire. Charlemagne and the Ottos had contended that it was the successor and heir of Imperial Rome, but Frederick insisted that the Empire had been ordained by God himself to rule over the whole earth, or at least over all Christendom. He recognized the papacy as a parallel organization, charged with spiritual functions, but he allowed it no authority in matters that were not strictly religious. In practice, however, he found it impossible to draw a clear distinction between spiritual and secular affairs. Ambitious popes put forward many claims that Frederick and his successors would not allow, and the quarrel between church and state was thereby extended over a far broader field than it had occupied in the days of Henry IV and Gregory VII.

Pope**Adrian IV**

Frederick's controversy with the papacy began in 1154 when Adrian IV (1154-1159), the only Englishman ever to become pope, was made head of the church. Some ten years earlier a revolution at Rome had set up a commune under a certain Arnold of Brescia, who was accused of holding heretical views on theology as well as planning to end papal rule in the city and to secularize all church property there. One pope was killed in the fighting, but his successor hastily recognized the commune before fleeing to France, where he died. Adrian soon brought the rebels to heel by placing Rome under an interdict—that is, he forbade priests to perform their normal functions in the city, or, as we might put it today, he called out the clergy on strike. Shortly thereafter, when the emperor requested the customary coronation by the pope, Adrian was delighted. At their first meeting, however, Frederick provoked a quarrel by refusing to hold the pope's stirrup as he dismounted. Argument continued for two days. At last Frederick was crowned, but only after he had held the pope's stirrup and hanged Arnold of Brescia. This execution of course infuriated the Italian communes, with whom Frederick had already had his difficulties. In fact, rioting at Rome compelled both pope and emperor to flee the city on the day after the coronation.

**Popes and
antipopes**

Still not satisfied, Adrian next sought a greater victory with the help of William, the Norman king of Sicily. He recognized William as the lawful ruler not only of Sicily but of all southern Italy as well, thereby founding what came eventually to be called the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. As Frederick too claimed the Italian territory, he was much annoyed by the pope's action. William, on his side, admitted that his entire kingdom was a fief held from the pope. Adrian then boldly put forward the claim (1157) that Frederick held the Empire itself as a fief from the papacy. Frederick immediately repudiated the claim and forced Adrian to explain away his words. The pope died less than two years later, and at the ensuing election the imperial cardinals voted for one candidate while those from other countries voted for another. As neither side would recede, the church had two popes, Alexander III (1159-1181), who continued Adrian's policies from a refuge in southern Italy, and the "antipope" Victor IV (1159-1164), who, with three successors, was maintained in Rome by Frederick. Alexander excommunicated the emperor immediately, but not until 1177 did Frederick make peace with him by agreeing to abandon the antipope.

Meantime the communes of northern Italy had risen in arms against Frederick. The extensive self-government they had won in the days of his two predecessors offended Frederick's ideas of imperial absolutism, and his determination to end communal liberties caused him to invade Italy with large armies no less than six times. On his first invasion (1154) he had trouble with Milan. He destroyed one small commune as a warning to the others, and, as we have seen, he hanged Arnold of Brescia. Though the communes had often shared Arnold's antipapal views, Adrian then found it easy to win their sympathies. Trouble continued until the emperor razed Milan itself in 1162. Five years later the communes organized against him the Lombard League, to which Venice, Genoa, and Pisa, as well as the pope and the king of the Two Sicilies gave their support. Most of Italy was momentarily united against Frederick, and in 1176 the communal armies defeated him severely at Legnano. In consequence of this disaster, the emperor was forced to make his humiliating peace of 1177 with Pope Alexander.

**Lombard
League
(1167)**

In his early days as emperor, Frederick had tried to appease the Welfs, then led by Henry the Lion, but he presently learned to his sorrow that such appeasement was impossible. Henry continued to build up his power in Saxony and east of the Elbe, until he was able to defy the emperor. On the eve of Legnano, Frederick pleaded with him on bended knee for troops, but in vain. Henry thus overreached himself, however, for the German nobility came to regard him as a greater menace than Frederick to their feudal liberties. They therefore transferred their support to the emperor, and in 1182 Henry was exiled from Germany for three years. Most of his estates were confiscated and distributed among more loyal vassals, with Bavaria itself going to the Wittelsbach family, which continued to rule it until 1918.

**Frederick's
triumphs
in Germany**

Frederick's victory over Henry was facilitated by his successful settlement of Italian affairs. Alexander III died in 1181, to be succeeded by several less vigorous and aggressive popes. Peace with the Lombard communes was concluded in 1183 by a treaty restoring their self-government. Perhaps the greatest triumph of all came a year later when Frederick announced the betrothal of his son Henry to Constance, heiress to the throne of the Two Sicilies. The marriage was solemnized in 1184 at Milan—which by this time had been rebuilt. The subsequent ruin of Henry the Lion left Frederick supreme at last. The old man then decided to round out a brilliant career by sharing

**And in
Italy**

in the Third Crusade. With a large army he marched east, but in Asia Minor he was drowned (1190). Frederick Barbarossa later became the hero of a legend declaring that he had not really been drowned at all but was imprisoned somewhere in a dark cavern, whence he would emerge to save his people in an hour of need.

Innocent III and Frederick II

**After
Frederick**

Frederick Barbarossa was succeeded by his son Henry VI, an ambitious and able young man of whom his admirers expected great things. Unfortunately, however, Henry died seven years later (1197), aged only thirty-two years. A few months later his wife, Constance of Sicily, followed him to the grave, leaving as sole heir a four-year-old son, the future Frederick II. As Sicily was held as a fief from the pope, the boy remained under papal guardianship for the next seventeen years.

**Civil war
in Germany**

After Henry's death the Hohenstaufen faction in Germany wished his brother, Philip of Swabia, to become Holy Roman Emperor while the Welfs, who by this time had regained some of their former power, voted for Otto, the son of Henry the Lion. Both men claimed the throne and engaged in civil war until Philip's death in 1208. Otto the Welf then ruled alone until he died in 1215. During all these years, however, the most powerful statesman in Europe was Pope Innocent III (1198-1216).

**Pope
Innocent III**

Born to a family of the Italian nobility, Innocent was primarily a diplomat and statesman, and he raised papal power to its highest point. In a later chapter (see page 535) we shall describe in greater detail his conception of a papal monarchy ruling the whole world according to the laws of God. At present we need only remark that his idea of world monarchy differed from that of Frederick Barbarossa (and of Frederick II) less than might appear at first glance. What he chiefly desired was that his officials (the clergy) should have supreme authority in this monarchy. Yet if he had happened to be born into the imperial family, Innocent would doubtless have favored imperial officials with equal zeal and thus have become a great emperor.

**His success
in Germany**

For ten years Innocent successfully played Philip and Otto off against each other, and thereby won more than Gregory VII had demanded of Henry IV during the investiture conflict. As soon as Otto became sole emperor, however, he turned against his patron and spent the rest of his life quarreling with the pope. In the end, Inno-

cent won, after Otto's armies had been badly defeated by the French at Bouvines in Flanders (1214).

Meantime Innocent had been active elsewhere in the pursuit of his dream of a papal supremacy embracing all Christendom. For many years the popes had ruled the Papal States of central Italy; they were recognized as the feudal overlords of all southern Italy and Sicily; and most of the northern Italian communes were their allies. Innocent therefore found it easy to dominate Italy. Moreover, even before 1198 the rulers of Portugal, Aragon, Provence, and Croatia had acknowledged themselves vassals of the pope. Innocent now advanced this program with great skill. By deftly exploiting the mutual animosities of sovereigns as well as their controversies with their subjects, by excommunicating kings who dared oppose him, by keeping whole countries under interdict for several years at a time, and by inciting or hiring other kings to attack his enemies, Innocent forced the rulers of England, Denmark, Poland, Bohemia, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Armenia, Jerusalem, and the Latin Empire set up at Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade (1204) to admit his overlordship. In fact, Otto and Philip Augustus of France were almost the only important sovereigns in Europe who failed to pay homage to Innocent. The papal monarchy thus attained great earthly power, but such splendor could not endure. With the great pope's death (1216) his world empire began to disintegrate.

*Innocent's
empire*

During his controversy with Otto, Innocent had secured the election of his ward, Frederick II, as Holy Roman Emperor (1211), and with Otto's death, the young man began to rule in his own name (1215-1250). Frederick was in many ways the most remarkable of medieval rulers. Admirers declared that, because of his many and varied talents, he was the *stupor mundi* ("the marvel of the world") while opponents bitterly accused him of profligacy, of skepticism, and even of atheism. His court at Palermo, frequented by Latins and Greeks, by Moslems, and by Jews, was the most brilliant in the West. But Frederick's imperial ambitions led him into unwise policies. His need of money caused him to rule Sicily with an iron hand through agents who attempted to direct the whole economic life of the island, and whose exactions ruined the kingdom. The rest of the Empire suffered even more. Like his grandfather Barbarossa, Frederick tried to subdue the Lombard communes, but only after several bloody wars did he achieve a certain measure of success (1237). His preoccupation with Sicilian and Italian affairs enabled German nobles to flout im-

*Emperor
Frederick II*

perial power. The most formidable of Frederick's opponents, however, were two able popes, Gregory IX (1227-1241) and Innocent IV (1243-1254), who continued the ambitious policies of Innocent III.

**The Sixth
Crusade
(1228-
1229)**

As a young man Frederick had taken a vow to lead a crusade to regain Jerusalem (again in Moslem hands since 1187; see page 338), but in the early years of his reign he found no time to fulfill his promise. When Gregory demanded immediate action, Frederick set sail in 1227 but was soon forced by illness to return to Italy. Gregory angrily excommunicated him. A year later Frederick embarked anew and presently his army entered Jerusalem (1229). Gregory's indignation knew no bounds, first because the emperor had presumed to go on a crusade while under the ban of excommunication, and secondly because he won Jerusalem by bargaining with the infidels rather than by slaughtering them. After placing the Holy City under an interdict, the pope invaded the Hohenstaufen lands in Italy with a mercenary army.

**Frederick's
final
troubles**

The sequel to these unedifying events need not be recounted in detail. After Frederick had regained his lands from the papal armies, the pope summoned a council of churchmen to depose the emperor, but Frederick circumvented him by capturing the fleet that was hearing the prelates to Rome—much to the scandal of Europe (1241). A few years later another church council, held by Innocent IV at Lyons in France, declared the emperor deposed (1244). Even this extreme measure failed to bring Frederick to terms. As long as he lived the emperor held his own against his redoubtable opponents, but his death in 1250 brought an end to Hohenstaufen power and virtually ended the medieval Empire itself.

**The fate
of Sicily**

The last stages of the decline of Hohenstaufen power may be summarized in a few words. Rule over Sicily passed to Frederick's illegitimate son Manfred, first as regent and, after 1258, as king. The popes continued their feud, however, and presently Pope Clement IV (1265-1268) induced Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX of France, to take over the kingdom. Manfred was defeated and killed in 1266, after which Charles ruled southern Italy and Sicily. His soaring ambition to rule all Italy and even to create a Mediterranean empire soon alienated his papal patrons, however, and his rule of Sicily was so oppressive that the people drove him out, after a general massacre of Frenchmen known as the "Sicilian Vespers" (1282). Immediately the island was seized by a Spanish king, Peter of Aragon. The pope vainly

proclaimed a crusade against Peter, whose family continued to rule Sicily for several generations. The descendants of Charles of Anjou retained southern Italy until 1435, when the Aragonese succeeded in bringing it under their rule, along with Sicily.

During the last years of his reign Frederick had established Ghibelline governments in most of the north Italian communes, and after his death these pro-Hohenstaufen Ghibellines seemed the best defense against the ambitions of Charles of Anjou. Before the end of the century, however, the propapal Guelphs were again raising their heads, and the communes were once more distracted by civil war as well as by the chronic wars of city against city. Relief came only when despots seized the various communes and put an end to party strife.

**Warfare
chronic
in Italy**

The political power of the papacy was likewise on the wane. The elaborate constructions of Innocent III had long since vanished into thin air, and while his successors included able men, who shared his towering ambitions, none could equal his performance. Boniface VIII (1294-1303) is often called the last of the medieval popes. Though an able man, his personal character left much to be desired, and he failed completely in his attempts to dominate the kings of Europe. His famous bull *Unam sanctam* (1302; see page 536) contained an exceptionally strong statement of papal claims, but by this time Boniface was merely trying to conceal his weakness behind extravagant language. Within five years began the "Babylonian captivity" of the papacy, when for seventy years seven successive popes were held in virtual captivity at Avignon by the kings of France.

**Decline of
papal
power**

Affairs in Germany went no better. Conrad IV (1250-1254) peacefully succeeded his father Frederick as emperor, but after this young man's death a disputed election resulted in two rival emperors, one an Englishman and the other a Spaniard, neither of whom ever ruled. The years from 1254 to 1273 are therefore called "the Great Interregnum." When both the rivals were dead, the imperial electors chose Rudolph of Hapsburg. The ruler of a small Alsatian principality, Rudolph owed his election to his weakness and his obscurity, for during the Interregnum the German nobles had seized vast powers which they did not propose to relinquish. The Italian possessions of the Hohenstaufens were lost, and Germany itself was torn to pieces by the rivalries of her noble families. Nevertheless, a brilliant future lay before the Hapsburgs. After various ups and downs, they held the title of Holy Roman Emperor continuously from 1438 until its

**"The Great
Interreg-
num" in
Germany**

final abolition by Napoleon in 1806, and they continued to rule as emperors of Austria until 1918.

LIMITED MONARCHY IN ENGLAND

Henry II

While the Hohenstaufen rulers of Germany were thus building and losing an empire in Italy, the English kings of the Plantagenet dynasty were following much the same course in France. Almost a hundred years had passed since William the Conqueror had won the battle of Hastings and become king of England (see page 443). The founder of the Plantagenet dynasty, Henry II, then inherited the



HENRY II AND ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE. This representation of Henry II (right) and his wife is now in the Cloisters, New York City. (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

English throne in 1154 (see page 445). He was young, energetic, and ambitious, with a large empire and high ideas regarding kingship. It was through his mother, Matilda, that he inherited the English throne. From his father, Geoffrey of Anjou, he inherited the French counties of Maine and Anjou, the duchy of Normandy, and the lordship of Brittany. Through his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, he acquired all southwestern France from the Loire to the Pyrenees, from the Atlantic almost to the Rhone. He held more than half of modern France, and though these various continental domains made him a vassal of the French king, his military power was such that he could defy his lord at will. Not content with these far-flung possessions, Henry conquered the eastern part of Ireland (1172) and took strenuous measures to augment his power in Scotland and Wales. His territories were almost as vast and as varied as those of his eminent contemporary, the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and his military strength was almost as great; but his empire, like Frederick's, rested upon no very solid foundations. It was held together only by the fact that, under one title or another, Henry ruled it all.

Henry was succeeded by his eldest son, Richard I (1189-1199), who is commonly known as *Coeur de Lion*, or *Lion-Heart*. Legend pictures Richard as the most chivalrous and romantic of the English kings, partly because of his participation in the ill-starred Third Crusade (1189-1192). Returning overland through Europe, Richard was captured at Vienna and held prisoner until the English paid the Emperor Henry VI an enormous ransom that amounted to almost two years' revenue of the crown (1194). The remaining five years of his life Richard passed largely on the Continent, waging war against the king of France, Philip Augustus. He was succeeded by his younger brother, John (1199-1216), who had been regent during the king's absence on the crusade. Three years after John began to rule, Philip Augustus claimed that by his misconduct the English king had forfeited all his lands in France. He found the military force to make good this claim, and the English managed to retain only a part of Aquitaine. John suffered severely in popular esteem because of this disaster, but the central government was by this time so strong that the king and the dynasty survived his misfortunes.

Ever since the coming of William the Conqueror in 1066, the government of England and the high offices in church and state had fallen to the Norman barons, either to men who themselves had fought under William at Hastings, to their descendants, or else to newcomers

**Richard I
and John**

**Normans
and
Saxons**

from Normandy. A sharp distinction was therefore drawn between Norman and Anglo-Saxon, between the governing class and the governed. The Normans and the court spoke French, but the common people continued to speak Anglo-Saxon. The Norman aristocrats therefore developed a strong class feeling that enabled the king to set up the strongest central government in western Europe.

**William's
strong
government**

Though the Normans introduced feudalism into England, William the Conqueror took great precautions to prevent the disruptive tendencies usually encouraged by that system. He maintained royal, nonfeudal, officials in all parts of the country; he made sure that no baron held estates in any one region that were large enough to provide formidable armies; he forbade building fortified castles without his express permission; he compelled all sub-vassals to take a special oath declaring that their first loyalty was to him. William thus created so strong a government that his son, William II, easily crushed the barons who rose against him. During the long struggle of Stephen with Matilda (1135-1154), the nobles managed to strengthen their positions greatly and dragged England into feudal anarchy, but Henry II remedied conditions with a ruthless hand. We are told, for example, that within a short time he destroyed more than a thousand unlicensed castles built during the preceding twenty years. Under Henry II the monarchy was stronger than ever.

**The
Curia
Regis**

Nevertheless the Norman kings did not have everything their own way. Like all European sovereigns at this time, they were in constant controversy with the church over investiture and countless other matters. They also had trouble with their Norman barons. This trouble was not due solely to the feudal pride and arrogance of the nobility or to their desire for extreme personal liberty. All the nobles holding fiefs directly from the king were automatically members of the *Magnum Concilium* (Great Council), which William consulted regularly, but when it became apparent that this body could not govern efficiently, the kings turned for advice to a small group of trained administrators and trusted barons known as the *Curia Regis* (King's Court). The barons deeply resented the activities of this court, whose members' exalted position and power were due to ability rather than to ancestry. Moreover, the system was expensive, and the barons knew that in the end they paid the bill. They therefore set themselves to limiting the powers of the king and his agents. The ensuing struggle was less disastrous than the parallel struggles on the Continent, and out of it sprang the institu-

tions that have since caused England to be hailed as "the mother of parliaments." Three of these institutions—trial by jury, Magna Carta, and parliament—deserve our close attention, even though the first of them had no connection with the controversy between the kings and their barons.

Trial by Jury

Toward the end of his reign William the Conqueror ordered a thorough survey of the resources of his realm. The findings were assembled in the famous *Domesday Book* (1086), which is still extant and which is of the greatest value to the economic historian of the Middle Ages, nothing comparable having been attempted elsewhere in Europe. We mention it in this paragraph, however, because of the method by which it was compiled. William sent agents into every shire and hundred (a subdivision of the shire, or county) to collect information. Upon arrival in a community the agents summoned several local inhabitants whom they forced to answer under oath various questions regarding the population, the acres of plowed land, pasture, and forest, and the revenue of each manor, what they then were and what they had been twenty years before in the days of Edward the Confessor (d. 1066). William thus established the practice of using juries to provide information required by the government. Later Norman kings had frequent recourse to such juries—so-called from the French verb *jur*er, "to swear."

**Origin
of juries**

Almost a century later Henry II began using juries in the administration of justice. The *Curia Regis* had long been the principal court of law in the kingdom, but as its members followed the king in his constant travels, litigants never knew where their cases would be heard. Henry therefore appointed a number of special judges to hold court regularly in each shire. As these judges traveled from place to place, following a regular annual circuit, they were called "itinerant justices." They looked after all the king's business in the shire, inspecting local administration, levying taxes, and dispensing justice. They formed an important link between the local and central governments. Upon arriving in a shire the justice would summon a jury and inquire what crimes had been committed there since his last visit. The jury replied under oath, giving him the names of the persons suspected of committing the crimes. Such juries were called "presentment juries" and resembled the grand juries of today, which

**Itinerant
justices**

may "indict" a person—that is, order that he be brought to trial—but do not actually try him or convict him.

**Common
methods
of trial**

In the days of Henry II the persons named by this jury were brought before the justice, where they underwent trial by the methods then in vogue. Sometimes they had recourse to trial by combat, with the accused fighting the accuser and the victor being considered vindicated. Another method of trial was compurgation, with a number of persons swearing that they believed the accused innocent or guilty. Most common of all, however, was trial by ordeal, with the accused attempting to prove his innocence by carrying a hot iron a certain distance, by picking a stone from the bottom of a kettle of boiling water, or by being bound and thrown into a pond or river to see whether or not he would float. While such methods of trial may seem silly to us, we should remember that during the ordeal everyone was under strong religious emotion, that everyone (including the accused) believed that the ordeal was a direct appeal to God, who would infallibly indicate the man's guilt or innocence, and that therefore a guilty man would probably confess rather than undergo tortures which would be of no avail. Trial by ordeal was the brutal practice of a superstitious age, but probably it worked rather better than we might suppose. Ordeals had to be discontinued after Innocent III, however. Leaders in the church forbade priests to assist at them (1215), not because they doubted the efficacy of the ordeal but because they felt that a priest should have no hand in an action that might result in the shedding of blood.

**Trial
juries**

Meantime Henry II had shown himself to be of a more skeptical mind, for he had little confidence in trial by combat or ordeal. He preferred to let juries settle matters, especially in civil cases concerning boundaries, the ownership of land or cattle, and the like. In such cases juries were summoned who, from their personal knowledge of the affair, returned a verdict (from Latin *verdictum*, "truly spoken"). This was the origin of our petit jury, or trial jury, yet it differed fundamentally from ours. In those days the jurors based their verdict on what they knew personally about the case; today they must swear that they know nothing of the case and that they will base their verdict on the testimony presented by witnesses in court. Not until the thirteenth century did it become customary for jurors to listen to the testimony of others. At first the petit jury was used in civil cases only, but after Innocent's decree the itinerant justices began using it in criminal cases as well. If an accused bully refused

to go before a jury, declaring that he preferred the judgment of the God of Battles, weights might be piled on him until he changed his mind or was crushed to death. These trials by jury took place only in the king's courts, however, and for many years to come the baronial courts continued to use the older procedures. In the end the superior justice provided by the royal courts did much to popularize them.

Magna Carta

Though Magna Carta dates only from the reign of John, it was the outcome of more than a century of controversy between the kings and their barons. When Henry I (1100-1135) came to the throne his royal title was none too good, and he sought popularity by promising to refrain from various practices of his predecessor, William II. This Coronation Charter marks an important step in the progress of limited monarchy, for though Henry quickly broke his promises, the charter was remembered and became the precedent for stronger limitations of royal authority. Henry II likewise had his troubles with his nobles, but controversy did not become acute until the days of John.

**Henry's
Coronation
Charter**

John was determined to be an absolute monarch like his father, Henry II, but unfortunately for him he lacked his father's genius and good fortune. He quarreled with everybody—the pope, the king of France, his barons, his loyal supporters—and eventually he was defeated. His loss of Normandy was a terrific blow to Norman pride. His great quarrel with the pope (during which Innocent kept England under an interdict for five years and John retaliated by outlawing all the clergy) caused great consternation and distress, alienating many of the common people. Apparently John's surrender to Innocent (1213; see page 481) was not greatly resented, but a year later his defeat by the French king at Bouvines (where he was aiding his uncle, Otto of Germany) was a much more serious reverse. The burghers of London and other towns had been inclined to favor John at first, but his merciless taxation turned them to his enemies. The year after Bouvines the barons, now supported by the clergy and burghers, met the king at Runnymede, on the Thames above London, where, on June 15, 1215, they compelled him to accept Magna Carta, the Great Charter.

**John's
misfortunes**

**Contents
of Magna
Carta**

This Magna Carta is the most famous document in English history, often extravagantly praised and often misunderstood. Its sixty-three clauses enumerate abuses of power from which John promised to abstain thereafter. Many clauses deal with matters of taxation, but others reaffirm various ancient rights of the barons, the church, and the burghers. The document was thoroughly feudal in spirit, setting forth rights and liberties that had long been implied in the feudal contract. It is quite incorrect to say that Magna Carta guaranteed trial by jury, or habeas corpus, or no taxation without representation. Moreover, it was a thoroughly reactionary document. If its authors had continued to have their way, strong government would have been forever impossible, and England would doubtless have fallen into a feudal anarchy similar to that which already was debilitating the Holy Roman Empire.

**Its later
importance**

Nevertheless, Magna Carta is a fundamental document in the history of liberty in the Western world. It clearly implies, though it nowhere states explicitly, that there are things which even a king must not do, for above him stands the law. Magna Carta thus checked those who preached the all-powerful state. In later times its clauses were misunderstood and misinterpreted until they were made to guarantee, not the feudal rights of a few thousand barons, but the fundamental rights and liberties of all men. Most of these rights and liberties were not conceived until much later, yet without Magna Carta the world today would be a much worse place than it is.

Parliament

**Weakness
of
Henry III**

Cruel necessity forced John to sign Magna Carta at Runnymede, but he had no intention of giving up the fight with his barons. Within a few weeks he was begging aid from his new overlord, Innocent III, who obligingly annulled the charter and absolved John from all his oaths. The papal pronouncement carried little weight in England, however, and both king and barons prepared for civil war. John raised an army of Flemish mercenaries, and the barons invited Louis, a son of the French king who had married John's niece, to become their leader and seize the throne of England. Louis landed in England and occupied London (May, 1216), but shortly thereafter John died and was succeeded by his nine-year-old son, Henry III (1216-1272). Since the barons preferred a child to a foreigner as king, Louis lost

their support and returned to France. For several years thereafter England was under a regency, with some of the authors of Magna Carta acting as regents. Even when a grown man Henry III showed no great strength of character, and he did little that is worth remembering, yet his long reign was a period of important developments in the English constitution. These developments culminated in the rise of parliament.

A famous clause in Magna Carta promised that the king would not collect more than the traditional feudal dues except after receiving express permission from his barons assembled in the *Magnum Concilium*. As the traditional feudal dues were never enough to meet the constantly rising costs of government, Henry had to call rather frequent sessions of the council (now coming to be called "parliament," from the French verb *parler*, "to speak") in order to beg new subsidies from his barons. The king's financial difficulties were increased by his bad management, by his unlucky wars in France, and by his subservience to various popes whose demands for money became utterly insatiable. At the same time his personal unpopularity was being intensified by the favors he showered upon foreigners, either Italian prelates or relatives of his French wife.

**Henry's
financial
difficulties**

Matters reached a climax when, in 1254, the pope offered the crown of Sicily to Henry (we have already seen—page 482—that he later sold it to Charles of Anjou) and Henry accepted it for his younger son, Edmund. In return the pope demanded a large army and a huge cash subsidy. When the army was defeated by Manfred (1258), Henry lost everything. Led by Simon de Montfort, a Frenchman who had married Henry's sister and become a good Englishman, the barons of England then rebelled. The king was forced to sign the Provisions of Oxford (1258), which provided for a permanent supervisory committee of fifteen barons to be consulted by the king on every important matter. This committee, if effective, might really have governed the kingdom, but the barons were too selfish for such responsibilities. Within three years their quarrels with each other enabled Henry to revoke all his promises—again with papal blessing. Civil war broke out anew. At the battle of Lewes (1264) Simon defeated the king and reestablished the supervisory committee with himself as its dominant member. A year later, in 1265, he was defeated and killed at Evesham, but during his year of power Simon had taken a step that was to have great importance in the subsequent development of parliament.

**Simon de
Montfort**

**Simon's
parliament
(1265)**

The parliaments which Henry III summoned in the early years of his reign were composed only of the barons who held fiefs directly from the crown, but presently it became customary to summon a certain number of knights from each shire as well. These knights were members of the lowest class in the feudal aristocracy, and for them attendance at parliament was a duty rather than a privilege. Their sole task was to grant the king money, and the king's officers in the shire selected the particular individuals who were to be summoned. Sometimes, however, the knights were able to make their influence felt enough to obtain redress of minor grievances before authorizing the grants to the king. Simon de Montfort, a man of broad views who wished his government to be popular with all classes of English society, summoned a parliament in 1265 which included not only the barons, the higher clergy, and two knights from each shire but also two burghers from each town and representatives of the lower clergy.

**The "Model
Parliament"
(1295)**

After Simon's death, parliament was summoned by the king as before, but the plan of having various social classes represented was continued. Thirty years later Edward I (1272-1307) summoned what came to be called (or rather, miscalled) the "Model Parliament" (1295). In this parliament, as in Simon's, the five social classes were represented. Each group then met as a separate body, but in later times the barons and high clergy united to form the House of Lords, the knights and burghers made up the House of Commons, and the lower clergy dropped out.

**European
and English
parliaments**

It cannot be said that at the end of the thirteenth century this English parliament was a wholly unique institution, for similar bodies had been evolving elsewhere. France had her Estates-General, Spain her *Córtes*. But these European parliaments possessed neither the power nor the vitality of their English counterpart, principally because they were merely consultative bodies: the king might ask their advice, but they had no way of making him follow it. The next few centuries were marked by a strong trend toward royal absolutism, before which the European parliaments succumbed. Several English kings tried to rule without parliament, but they never succeeded. By insisting upon the right to approve taxation, English parliamentary leaders made government without their coöperation impossible. On the other hand, they allowed England to keep her monarchy. By gradually limiting the powers of the king, the English

prevented royal absolutism, and in the end they reduced the royal power virtually to zero. Today the English monarch still has a throne, but functions primarily as a symbol of English national unity.

FRANCE

The king who shook the Capetian dynasty out of its long sloth (see page 440), thereby starting France on her rise to a position as a great power, was Philip II (1180–1223), now commonly called Philip Augustus but known in the Middle Ages as “Philip the Conqueror.” Coming to the throne at the age of fifteen, he inherited the ancestral lands of the Capet dynasty, known as the *Île de France*, and a feudal lordship over the various dukes and counts who ruled the western three-quarters of modern France—the part that went to Charles when Charlemagne’s empire fell to pieces (see page 419). One of these vassals, Henry II of England, held more land in France than Philip and all his other vassals combined; other vassals held more than Philip alone. In 1190 Philip accompanied Richard I of England on the Third Crusade, quarreled with him bitterly, and, returning home, intrigued with John against him. Soon after John became king, however, Philip declared forfeit all the English possessions in France. Within a short time he had seized all John’s lands north of the Loire, and before his death he had added considerable areas south of that river. Of their former vast possessions in France, the English retained only Guienne and Gascony. Meantime Philip had also advanced to the northeast of the *Île de France* in the region now known as Picardy. And lastly, he started a military campaign, completed by his son, that added the county of Toulouse, or Languedoc, to the royal possessions (for the religious aspects of this campaign, see page 526). The Capetian dynasty for the first time held lands whose shores were washed by the Mediterranean, and Philip was beyond doubt the most powerful man in France.

Philip was succeeded by his son, Louis VIII (1223–1226), whose brief reign was largely occupied with the war against the count of Toulouse. The crown then passed to the king’s twelve-year-old son, Louis IX, whose mother, Blanche of Castile, acted as regent for nine years. At first it seemed that the work of Philip Augustus might be undone, with England regaining her continental possessions and France again falling into feudal anarchy. But Blanche was a remark-

*The France
of Philip
Augustus*

*Blanche
of Castile*

able woman, quite the equal in intelligence, determination, and imperiousness of her maternal grandmother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, the formidable wife of Henry II of England. She quickly mastered the situation, and the kingdom which her son took over in 1236 was the strongest that a Capetian had yet ruled.

Louis IX

Louis IX (1226–1270) is commonly called St. Louis, because not long after his death he was formally canonized by the Roman Church (1297). No king of France has more amply deserved that distinction. Louis is also the medieval king of France whom we know the best, partly because we have a biography written by his faithful friend and companion, the Sieur de Joinville, which remains a masterpiece of medieval French literature. Louis was a mild and well-beloved king, but one who took his duties very seriously. His Christian pacifism made him averse to war—by a peace treaty with the English signed in 1259 he voluntarily gave them broader boundaries than they were in a military position to demand—yet he went on two crusades. During the Seventh Crusade (1248–1254) he was taken prisoner in Egypt, and he died while on the Eighth Crusade. (This crusade had been diverted to attack Tunis, presumably in furtherance of the grandiose schemes of Louis's brother, Charles of Anjou, for extending his Sicilian and Italian empire to embrace the whole Mediterranean; see page 482.) St. Louis added no territory to the royal demesne, but his simple manners, his sincere piety, and his high sense of justice endeared him to all classes of society. He thereby strengthened the French monarchy more than he could have strengthened it by victorious wars and the annexation of new provinces.

Philip IV, "the Fair"

The last important king of this line was Louis's very unsaintly grandson, Philip IV (1285–1314), called "the Fair." By this time the feudal nobility of France had been so thoroughly cowed as no longer to menace the king's position. Philip's foreign wars were not of major importance. He fought with Edward I of England over Aquitaine, but the most important consequence of the war was an alliance with the king of Scotland. This alliance endured for almost three centuries, during which period Scotland was deeply influenced, both politically and culturally, by the French. Philip's most serious difficulty was with Flanders, then torn by a civil war between the rich burghers and the poorer classes. Philip invaded Flanders, at the invitation of the former party, but he was badly defeated at Courtrai (1302). In the end, however, he secured a few cities, among them Lille and Douai.

The conquests of Philip Augustus and his son necessitated a great expansion of the administrative machinery of the kingdom, and the long reign of St. Louis witnessed many changes. Since these innovations often resembled those introduced into England by Henry II, historians suspect that the French owed much to Norman administrators trained in England before the conquest of Normandy by Philip Augustus. It was in the days of St. Louis, too, that Paris took its position as the capital and leading city of France. Traces of his work are still to be seen in that city, chief among them, perhaps, being the beautiful Sainte Chapelle, which he built to house the famous Crown of Thorns—supposedly the crown forced upon the head of Jesus by Roman soldiers shortly before the Crucifixion—which had been brought to France. In his day, too, Paris became the intellectual center of Europe because of her university.

**French
government
reformed**

Philip the Fair was assisted by lawyers trained in Roman law, and he aspired to an absolute monarchy on the Justinian model. Though he summoned the Estates-General in 1302, giving that body its definitive organization, he carefully prevented it from acquiring real power through control of the royal purse. His quarrels with Boniface VIII (see pages 483 and 613) really marked the end of the medieval church, and it was Philip who inaugurated the seventy-year "Babylonian captivity" of the papacy. He confiscated church property to relieve his financial distress and even declared that if necessary he might confiscate it all. He compelled the pope to abolish the Knights Templar, a famous and wealthy crusading order, and confiscated part of their vast property. In a word, France entered a new period in her history with Philip the Fair.

**Quarrels
with the
church**

Philip was succeeded by his three sons in turn, each of whom died without male issue after a rather short reign. The direct line of the Capetians thus died out, and in 1328 the crown passed to the descendants of Philip's brother, Charles, count of Valois. The Valois dynasty then ruled France for two centuries and a half, during the period that is sometimes called the Renaissance.

**The last
Capetians**

THE SPANISH PENINSULA

In Spain too the thirteenth century was a highly important period in national history. We have seen (page 447) how Alfonso VI of Castile completed the first stage of the reconquest of Spain from the Moslems by taking Toledo in 1085. A year later the Moslem ruler of

**Almoravids
and
Almohades**

**Reconquest
of
Andalusia**

Cordova secured the aid of an African tribe, the Almoravids, and Alfonso was badly defeated. The Almoravids then subjugated and united the various petty Moslem states of southern Spain—the debris of the empire of the Spanish Ommiads—and ruled them with an iron hand for forty-six years. They in turn were overthrown by a second African dynasty, the Almohades, whose empire included not only Moslem Spain but Morocco, Algeria, and Tunis as well (1130–1269).

As long as these warlike dynasties were in their prime, the Christians made only slight progress against them. In 1212, however, Alfonso VIII of Castile (1158–1214, son-in-law of Henry II of England and father of Blanche of Castile) inflicted a severe defeat upon the Moors at Las Navas de Tolosa, after which the reconquest proceeded rapidly. Alfonso's grandson, Ferdinand III (1217–1252), took Cordova in 1236, Mureia in 1243, and completed the reconquest of Andalusia (the valley of the Guadalquivir River) with the capture of Seville in 1248 and of Cadiz two years later. Thereafter the only Moslem power in Spain was the kingdom of Granada, which held Gibraltar and the southeastern coast of Spain through Malaga and Almería, as well as the mountainous country around Granada. The situation became just the reverse of that prevailing in the days of Moslem supremacy, when the Christians clung desperately to a little mountainous country in the north. However, the Sierra Nevadas protected this last Moorish outpost so effectively that, in spite of repeated assaults, the Spaniards did not enter Granada until 1492.

**Aragonese
expansion**

The slowness of the Christian reconquest of Spain in the twelfth century was due in part to the unity and strength of the Moslems, but in part also to the divisions and quarrels of the Christians amongst themselves. As we have seen, there were half a dozen mutually hostile Christian states in northern Spain. They enjoyed a cultural and above all a religious unity, but they could not co-operate effectively, even to drive out the hated infidels. But Castile and León were finally united under Ferdinand III in 1230, thereby becoming the strongest single state in the peninsula. Aragon and Catalonia had been united as early as 1137, but their union was of doubtful advantage for the reconquest, for the new state was distracted by Catalonia's large territories in Languedoc (southern France). When these lands were lost, during the wars of Philip Augustus against Toulouse (1213), and Aragon could again turn her attention to the reconquest, she took Valencia from the Moors in 1238. Her port of Barcelona became the busiest in the western Mediterranean,

however, and the imaginations of the Aragonese turned to overseas expansion. As early as 1232 they conquered the Moors in the Balearic Islands, and as we have seen (page 482), the king of Aragon established himself in Sicily after the Sicilian Vespers and the expulsion of Charles of Anjou from that island (1282).

Meantime the Portuguese had been conducting their own reconquest, taking Lisbon in 1147 and reaching their present boundaries in 1253. As Navarre had temporarily passed under the rule of a French house, only three Christian kings remained in the peninsula. Aragon and Castile were finally united (1479) by the marriage of their respective sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella (the patrons of Columbus), but attempts to unite Spain and Portugal in the seventeenth century came too late. For many years these two kingdoms were bitter rivals, but today they more peaceably divide the peninsula between them.

This phase of the reconquest had been accomplished largely in the days of Ferdinand III of Castile (1217-1252) and James I of Aragon (1213-1276). Victory in battle of course brought great prestige to these monarchs, each of whom sought to increase his royal power by exploiting his personal popularity. To a certain extent they were successful, but the circumstances of the reconquest also created other forces which limited their ambitions. The kings found it necessary to reward their major followers with great estates, especially in Andalusia, and the recipients presently became an aristocracy rich and powerful enough to restrain their king. It may be added that the vast estates of these fortunate grandees, and the abject servitude of the peasantry upon them, have bedeviled Spain from that day to this: great migrations from Andalusia to the Americas failed to relieve the popular misery which was a major cause of the civil wars that have racked Spain in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Moreover, at the time of the reconquest the kings gave numerous charters to towns serving as military posts. Even in the thirteenth century they then found themselves forced to listen to the advice of nobles and townsmen assembled in the *Córtes*, or parliament. Not until the days of Ferdinand and Isabella were they able to overcome this opposition—which incidentally is one of the reasons for the long life of the Moorish kingdom of Granada.

The fact that the reconquest usually took the form of a religious crusade made a deep and lasting impression upon the Spanish mind. The Catholic Church played an inspiring role in the reconquest, and

**Reconquest
by Portugal**

**Role of the
recon-
quered
provinces**

**Role of the
Catholic
Church**

in Spain more than in any other country, perhaps, it has continued, for better or for worse, to be a major factor in political life, sometimes arousing zeal and enthusiasm for idealistic causes but sometimes filling domestic disputes with unparalleled bitterness and cruelty. It was not inappropriate that the kings of Spain should later style themselves "Their Catholic Majesties."

THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

A period of transition

Enough has now been said to show that, toward the end of the thirteenth century, central and western Europe was changing rapidly. The Western world was entering one of those great transitional periods in which one way of life, or one type of civilization, replaces another. Such transitions never come suddenly, and it is impossible to give precise dates for their beginnings or endings, just as it is impossible to indicate the exact minute at which night changes to morning or evening gives way to night. We can only say that toward the year 1300 many things were obviously changing, that those which we associate primarily with the Middle Ages were passing away or else undergoing such fundamental changes as to be no longer recognizable, and that at the same time new things which we associate primarily with the next period in history were appearing on every hand.

An end to the old

In the first place, the Hohenstaufen dynasty had passed from the scene (1254), after a long period in which its control of the Holy Roman Empire had given it a unique position in the Western world. The fall of Acre (1291) may be taken as marking the end of the crusades. Boniface VIII's famous bull, *Unam sanctam* (1302), was the last serious assertion of the medieval theory of papal supremacy over all the secular rulers of Christendom. Men continued for many years to talk about the Holy Roman Empire, to preach new crusades, and to dream of a papal monarchy, but their talk was not taken very seriously. At the same time the feudal system was giving way, sometimes before strong monarchies, as in western Europe, sometimes before city-states ruled by tyrants, as in northern Italy, and sometimes before ambitious petty princes, as in Germany. The new rulers of Europe relied upon mercenary armies, or perhaps citizen armies, rather than upon feudal levies, and they governed with the aid of lawyers and trained administrators rather than feudal lords. The cost of these mercenaries and administrators drove them

to desperate expedients to find revenue above that paid as feudal dues. Moreover, the economic production of Europe was increasing steadily, permitting the growing population to maintain higher standards of living than had prevailed in the days of Charlemagne or Hugh Capet or William the Conqueror. In later chapters we shall see what profound repercussions these fundamental economic and political changes produced in almost every phase of human activity.

These changes were the result, of course, of countless causes, but two new forces then at work in society stand out above all others. One was trade; the other, nationalism. When their money economy replaced feudal economy by barter, the merchant class made possible the mercenary armies and administrators; and with their new wealth they saved the day for hard-pressed kings faced with bankruptcy. By the end of the thirteenth century the more intelligent kings were actively courting the new bourgeoisie. As the price of their support, however, the rich burghers made extensive demands upon the kings. For example, they demanded that the kings suppress the private warfare of the feudal nobles and do what they could to eliminate other forms of brigandage: usually the kings were happy to oblige. The burghers, finding that feudal law did not cover many questions that arose in their commercial dealings, demanded better laws. Sometimes they urged the adoption of the Justinian Code, which covered many points ignored by feudal law. Here too the kings usually were glad to cooperate, partly perhaps because the Justinian Code taught royal absolutism. In fact, the code opened with the famous dictum, "The will of the prince has the force of law." In England, on the other hand, the kings and their lawyers worked out new codes of law which, though often showing the influence of Roman ideas, preserved old English traditions. Edward I (1272-1307) was especially active in promoting such legislation, as a result of which he is sometimes called "the English Justinian." The burghers also found much to criticize in the church, and again the kings were usually glad to listen with both ears. The resulting alliances of kings and burghers were a major factor in bringing the Middle Ages to an end and ushering in a new day.

The second great revolutionary factor appearing at this time was nationalism. Several centuries were yet to pass before political theorists began to identify nationality with language and to declare that political frontiers should rightfully coincide with language frontiers. Nevertheless, the wars of the thirteenth century led to the

*Trade and
the new
monarchies*

*The new
nationalism*

creation of what were virtually national states in England, France, Spain, and even Sicily. After the fall of the Hohenstaufens, the ghost of the Holy Roman Empire was little more than a feeble sort of German national state. Men began to feel themselves Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans, or Italians, no matter who their rulers might happen to be, recognizing other Englishmen or Frenchmen as their kinsmen and taking pride in their achievements. This feeling of nationality was encouraged by the traders, who traveled about the country, who knew much more of the world than most people had known a few generations earlier, and who found it easier to get along with and do business with people who spoke the same language they did. The rise of differing systems of law, and of distinctive political institutions, touched the lives of many men and encouraged national pride. Hostility to the foreigners, especially Italians, to whom the pope frequently gave high offices in the church, was another source of nationalistic feeling. And it would be hard to overemphasize the importance of literatures in the popular or vernacular languages (English, French, German, Italian, etc.), such as began to appear in the thirteenth century. Nationalism was just beginning at this time, and it had not yet reached the dizzy heights it later attained, yet it already felt itself to be incompatible with the universalizing ideals of the Middle Ages and with such medieval institutions as a universal empire and a universal church.

XI

St. Francis (Bettmann Archive)



THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH—

PIETY AND HERESY—

THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

Political Events	Ecclesiastical Leaders	Spiritual Leaders	Judaism
496 Conversion of Clovis			
597 Missionaries in England	590– 608 Pope Gregory I	d. 543 St. Benedict	200 Mishna 500 Talmud
756 Donation of Pepin	752– 757 Pope Stephen II		
800 Charlemagne crowned	795– 816 Pope Leo III		
1039– 1056 Henry III emperor [Cluniac reforms]		d. 1049 Odilo of Cluny	
1056– 1106 Henry IV emperor [investiture conflict]	1059 [College of Cardinals]	d. 1072 St. Peter Damiani	
1077 Conasta	1073– 1085 Pope Gregory VII		
1096– 1099 First Crusade	1088– 1099 Pope Urban II	d. 1109 St. Anselm d. 1153 St. Bernard 1179 Peter Waldo excom- municated	d. 1105 Rashi Pogroms
1122 Concordat of Worms			
1208 Albigensian Crusade	1198– 1216 Pope Innocent III	d. 1202 Joachim of Floris d. 1221 St. Dominic d. 1226 St. Francis of Assisi d. 1253 St. Clara d. 1255 Thomas of Celano d. 1274 St. Thomas Aquinas	d. 1204 Maimonides
Height of Papal Power	1215 [Fourth Lateran Council] 1243– 1254 Pope Innocent IV		
1303 "Terrible Day of Anagni"	1294– 1303 Pope Boniface VIII		1290 Jews expelled from England

29. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

In the last two chapters we have had frequent occasion to mention the political, and even the military, activities of the medieval church. Such activities may seem strange to a student holding modern views as to the nature of the church and its place in society, and they would certainly have seemed so to an early Christian. Even in the Middle Ages, many sincere and pious Christians disapproved of them whole-heartedly, and most thoughtful people regarded them as secondary parts of the church's program. In those days, as in the early centuries and now, the church was primarily a religious institution, whose principal functions, all men agreed, were to worship God and save men's souls. But throughout the Middle Ages, church leaders sought to dominate all society in a fashion to which no one aspires today. The medieval church was a social and political institution as well as a religious one.

Doubtless many persons, then as now, believed that the salvation of their souls depended largely upon learning a few magic formulas that would get them into heaven after they were dead, but others preferred to believe that the best way to get there was to lead a good life in this world. They considered it the duty of the church to teach men what this good life was, and to aid them in attaining it. But when Christian thinkers began to elaborate their ideas as to the nature of the good life, they found it necessary to base their thinking upon very broad foundations, and eventually they worked out a complicated theology that covered pretty much everything in heaven and earth. Moreover, it was not enough merely to know what the good life should be. Most men required encouragement and help in their efforts to achieve it. This help was provided by the

*The
medieval
church and
society*

*Duties of
the church*

organized church, with its clergy and its sacraments, which thus came to occupy a larger place in theology and society than it usually does today.

**All men
Catholic
Christians**

The Middle Ages differed from ancient and modern times in another important particular as well. Everyone in the Western world (except, of course, the Jews) then considered himself a member of the one Catholic Church. Of course, the barbarians who had only recently accepted Christianity (perhaps because of military defeat at the hands of Clovis, Charlemagne, or Alfred the Great) could hardly be expected to become good Christians overnight. On the contrary, they and their descendants for several generations retained much of their old pagan ignorance and superstition. In general, however, the persons who dominated the political and intellectual life of the West accepted the Christian view of the world. They looked upon Christianity as an essential part of their way of life, and they believed it everyone's duty to do what he could to make the Christian way of life prevail. Of course there were wide differences of opinion as to the best way to accomplish this mighty task, but doubt was rarely expressed as to the desirability of accomplishing it. This desire led to the complicated medieval elaborations of the simple church of early Christian times.

CHURCH AND CLERGY

**Parish
priests**

Every medieval village had a church building, and the village itself was called the "parish" of the priest who held services there. This man had undoubtedly been born a peasant, but upon deciding to enter the priesthood he had probably been sent to a school where he learned to read a little Latin and acquired a rudimentary knowledge of theology and the liberal arts. As a result of his travels and scholastic education, this parish priest usually held a somewhat broader and more enlightened view of the world than did his parishioners. He had a house near the village church, he was allotted a share of the land of the manor on which he raised his food, and he might receive a small stipend besides from the bishop or the lord of the manor; but he was not permitted to marry or raise a family. In addition to conducting the ordinary and special church services (weddings, funerals, and the like), he might teach children a little popular theology and sacred history, or find other ways to make himself useful.

Bishops

The bishop, exercising a general supervision over the churches

and clergy of a larger district, called a "diocese," was a more distinguished man. In many cases he was the younger son of a noble family, well educated (for that day) and possessed of considerable administrative ability. As the government of a diocese was usually too much for one man, the bishop had a staff of assistants, called "canons." These assistants too were drawn largely from the upper social classes, and many of them would undoubtedly become bishops themselves some day. The bishops often had large incomes, partly gifts from pious benefactors but largely the revenue from lands belonging to the church. In times of need kings had often seized church lands, but in compensation they permitted the bishops to continue collecting a part of the crop each year. This payment, called a "tithe," was virtually equivalent to a tax, and before the thirteenth century a major portion of the land of western Europe had become subject to such church taxes. In the early Middle Ages bishops had enjoyed a high degree of local independence—means of communication being what they were, close supervision by higher church authorities was out of the question—but presently the bishops of the more important towns, called archbishops, came to outshine their humbler colleagues. Towering over all the bishops and archbishops of the West, however, stood the bishop of Rome, commonly called the pope.

In early times a bishop was chosen by the clergy and Christian people of his diocese, but in the Middle Ages election was made by the canons. Because of the bishops' high prestige and authority, kings wished to control them and even to make use of them in the government. At the very least they considered it essential to have the church governed by bishops friendly to themselves. They therefore persuaded or compelled the canons to elect men whom they named. At the same time the popes, inspired by the Cluniac reformers, were aggressively trying to consolidate the administration of the church by bringing the bishops under papal control. This ambition seemed to require choosing the bishops in the first place. Hence arose the "investiture conflict" of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, with kings and popes each insisting upon the right to appoint church officials (see page 437). At first various compromises were effected, allowing both king and pope to veto any election, but gradually the popes gained the upper hand in most countries.

**Election
of bishops**

In early times popes were chosen like other bishops, but in the tenth and eleventh centuries the Roman nobility had come to dominate elections to a scandalous extent. A reforming pope therefore

**The College
of
Cardinals**

set up the College of Cardinals (1059), whose members were to choose his successor. At first these cardinals were selected from the more important clergy in Rome, but presently it became customary to add eminent Italian clergymen, and before the end of the Middle Ages a few cardinals were named from outside Italy, thus giving the College a more international and representative character. This system prevails to the present day. The College now consists of seventy cardinals, chosen for life by the pope, with members from every important Catholic country. When a pope dies, the cardinals assemble in "conclave" and elect the next pope—in practice, at least, from their own number.

**Monks
and nuns**

Clergymen of all these ranks were known as the "secular" clergy because they lived in the "world" (Latin, *saecula*), that is, in the towns and villages along with everybody else. There were other clergymen, however, who wished to withdraw from the "world" and live with a few like-minded persons in monasteries. They were called the "regular" clergy because they lived according to the "rule" (*regula*) of their monastery. At first the monasteries of the West usually followed the rule of St. Benedict (480–543; see page 292), but from time to time new monastic orders appeared, especially after the Cluniac reformers began to decline late in the eleventh century. In early times each Benedictine monastery was largely independent of the others, but in the tenth century a tighter organization was developed by the monks at Cluny. All monks were required to take vows pledging themselves to poverty, celibacy, and obedience (to their monastic superiors), but the monasteries themselves sometimes became rich, holding huge tracts of land and collecting titles from others. Part of this wealth they used for charitable purposes, especially during famines and other periods of distress, and part of it went into elaborate building programs. Each monastery was ruled by an abbot, elected for life by the monks from their own number. Monasteries, strictly speaking, were for men only, but convents, sometimes called nunneries, received women, who took the same three vows and were ruled by an abbess.

**Franciscans
and
Dominicans**

The rise of town life brought new problems to the church, in response to which new types of clergy appeared. The Franciscan and Dominican orders, whose members were ordinarily called friars (from the Latin *frater*, "brother") to distinguish them from Benedictine and other monks, were founded in the opening years of the

thirteenth century. The friars differed widely from monks and parish priests. At first they had no special churches of their own, and though they took the three vows of the monks, they did not lead secluded lives in monasteries. In the early days of their orders, these friars wandered from place to place, begging their daily bread as they went and preaching the Gospel to the poor in the towns. In later times they became more settled, built central houses or monasteries of their own, had their own churches, opened schools, engaged in missionary work in foreign lands, and busied themselves with countless other activities. They were perhaps the most enthusiastic and effective defenders and promoters of Christianity in the thirteenth century.

Finally, brief mention must be made of the crusading orders. Their members were not priests or monks at all, but knights who fought for Christianity and the church with the sword. They took various vows, however, and lived according to seminonastic rules. The most famous were the Templars and Hospitalers, but there were several lesser orders. After the fall of Acre (1291) had brought an end to the crusading adventure in Palestine, these orders had varied histories. Some were rich enough to tempt the avarice of kings, and in 1318 the Templars were abolished at the behest of the king of France, who straightway seized their vast properties in his kingdom. The Hospitalers, who had cared for the sick during the First Crusade but later devoted themselves primarily to fighting, continued a checkered career for several centuries as the rulers first of Rhodes and later of Malta. A minor order, known as the Teutonic Knights, founded at Acre during the Third Crusade, transferred its operations to northern Europe, where, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, its members occupied the territories now known as East Prussia and the Baltic States, establishing German civilization and German power there and winning rich estates for themselves.

**Crusading
orders**

The Papal Curia

The task of ruling the medieval church was so great that the popes required the assistance of a vast administrative body known as the papal curia. It employed hundreds of persons, who made up the most efficient office force then known to Europe. The pope himself presided over its operations, and cardinals were in charge of its several subdivisions or bureaus. The papal chancery handled an enormous cor-

**The church's
central
offices**

respondence (we still have over six thousand letters from Innocent III alone) and issued all official proclamations.¹ The papal penitentiary concerned itself with excommunications, interdicts, dispensations, indulgences, and the like. The rota heard appeals from the decisions of lower authorities and handled cases of church law, striving to become a sort of supreme court for Christendom. The papal camera was the department of finance, receiving and disbursing the huge papal revenues.

**Papal
revenue**

The pope's revenue came from many sources: from papal estates, from the gifts of pious persons, from tribute collected in states (such as England) that recognized the pope as overlord, from court fees and fines, from subsidies paid by monasteries and clergymen, from the sale of offices, and from the sale of indulgences. In spite of all this revenue, however, the popes never had enough money, and often they were driven to such extreme measures as borrowing at usurious rates from Italian bankers. Boniface VIII proclaimed the year 1300 a "Jubilee Year," offering spiritual rewards to all who would then visit Rome and make substantial gifts to the church. Tens of thousands of pilgrims accepted his offer, depositing their gifts on tables before an altar in St. Peter's Church, where monks armed with wooden rakes gathered them in. This "Holy Year" has been repeated from time to time ever since.

**The papal
diplomatic
corps**

To maintain a close supervision over the churches and governments of the various countries, the popes developed a system of legates that eventually became a diplomatic corps. Lesser offices were usually held by natives of the country where they were stationed, but the popes relied primarily upon Italians for high diplomacy. Special legates, called "nuncios," were sent to represent the pope at coronations, royal weddings, and the like. To negotiate a treaty (called a "concordat") or for other weighty tasks, the pope might send a cardinal entrusted with his full powers for that particular mission.

**Church
courts**

The power of the popes was greatly increased by their control over the church's law courts. Every bishop and archbishop had a court, and the papal curia listened to appeals from them all. These church courts handled a wide variety of cases. All suits concerning the clergy were heard there, as were those of laymen which touched upon

¹ These official documents are called "papal bulls" because of the "seal" (Latin, *bullā*) attached at the bottom to prove their authenticity: each bull is named from its first two words in Latin (e.g., *Unam sanctam*), though these words rarely give a hint as to its contents.

matters in which the church was interested. Thus church courts tried all cases concerning marriage, legitimacy, wills, oaths, perjury, blasphemy, sacrilege, and countless other matters that seemed to have a connection with religion or with the church's activities.

The law used in these courts was church law, commonly called "canon law." It was based in part upon the precepts of the Bible, in part upon the decisions of church councils, in part upon the decrees of popes, and in part upon the principles of Roman civil law. Its long history began in the early centuries of the church and reached a climax when the law was codified in a famous book, the *Decretum*, by an Italian lawyer named Gratian about 1140. During the next two centuries several new compilations were required to keep the work up to date, for during this whole period canon law was a living and growing organism. The new developments were largely the work of the popes and the curia, with the popes handing down new decrees and reinterpreting old ones. It was universally believed that the Bible revealed various "laws of God" which the popes could not deliberately set aside, but the popes declared what these laws were, and they could always interpret a Biblical text as they saw fit. The pope could also grant individuals or groups of persons "dispensations" permitting them to disregard specific church laws, such as those forbidding meat on Fridays or the marriage of close kindred, but in theory no papal dispensation could set aside the laws of God.

**Canon
law**

Though the popes were rapidly building up an absolute and autocratic monarchy to rule the whole Latin Church, they were not yet in a position to ignore the other bishops or to do without their cooperation. They therefore continued the ancient practice of holding church councils from time to time. In a sense this method of settling important matters went back to New Testament times, but the first general, or "ecumenical," council—one attended by bishops from all parts of the Christian world—was the one held at Nicaea in 325. Six such councils were summoned by the popes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Only Latin bishops attended, however, and usually they merely approved what the pope had already done. Thus the First Lateran Council assembled in Rome in 1123 to ratify the Concordat of Worms, which momentarily concluded the investiture conflict. The most important of these medieval church councils was the Fourth Lateran, held at Rome under the auspices of Innocent III in 1215. It was attended by more than a thousand bishops and abbots, or their representatives, and under the prodding of its sponsor it

**Church
councils**

transacted an enormous amount of business. Neither in theory nor in practice, however, were the church councils a serious check on the papal prerogative.

THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS

Meaning of sacrament

We have already seen that medieval men considered the purpose and function of this vast ecclesiastical establishment to be the salvation of souls. To attain this end, the church used all practicable means that presented themselves, but the most important among them was administering the sacraments. A sacrament was a religious ceremony giving a special "grace," or strength, to those who partook, thus fortifying them to achieve salvation. Many ceremonies have been considered sacramental at one time or another, but before the thirteenth century the number had been set at seven, and such it remains to the present day in the Roman Church. These seven sacraments are baptism, confirmation, extreme unction, Eucharist, penance, matrimony, and ordination. Every Christian was supposed to partake of the first five sacraments, the first three only once, but to perform penance and receive the Eucharist at least once a year. Of course most people received the sacrament of matrimony, but only priests received ordination. Since these sacraments could be administered only by a priest, his services were vitally necessary to anyone seeking salvation, and consequently great force was given to the "interdict"—an order by the pope forbidding priests to administer the sacraments.

How sacraments were performed

In early times baptism had been performed by immersion, but in the Middle Ages it usually was done simply by sprinkling the recipient with a few drops of water while the priest pronounced the appropriate words. At first only adults, old enough to make serious decisions for themselves, were baptized, but in the Middle Ages, as in most churches today, persons ordinarily were baptized when only a few days old. By baptism a person became a Christian and a member of the church, and he was cleansed from the taint of "original sin"—that is, the taint supposedly inherited by all members of the human race from the sin of their first ancestor, Adam. Confirmation was the laying on of hands and anointing by the bishop; it was received by adolescents to strengthen them in the Christian life. Extreme unction was the anointing of the dying, to prepare them for the next world. Matrimony was the ceremony by which two persons became man and

wife. As this union was held to be indissoluble, divorce was impossible, but a marriage might be "annulled"—that is, regarded as though it had never taken place—if it were proved that the two parties were blood relatives, or that one already had a living spouse, or that there had been some other legally recognized impediment to the marriage. The cost of proving such an impediment in the church courts was so great, however, that annulments remained a luxury for the rich and powerful. Ordination, performed by a bishop, made a man a priest, with the right and power of administering all the other sacraments except confirmation.

The Eucharist and penance were the most elaborate of the seven sacraments, and a considerable part of medieval theology centered around them. The Eucharist was a commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross, and it became the very heart and center of Christian worship. Around it developed the stately sequence of prayers and ceremonies known as the Mass—prayers and ceremonies roughly corresponding to those which Protestants now call the Communion service or the Lord's Supper. In the course of the ceremony, which recalled the last supper of Jesus with his disciples on the eve of the Crucifixion, the participants solemnly ate bread and drank wine, as Jesus and the disciples had done on that memorable evening. At first all worshipers took both bread and wine, but in the Middle Ages, as in Catholic churches today, the laity received the bread while only the priest drank wine.

Eucharist

The important part of the sacrament of the Eucharist concerned the bread and wine, which were called the Host (from the Latin *hostia*, "sacrifice"). In the Middle Ages, as today, the Catholic Church insisted that the body and blood of Christ were "really, truly, and substantially" present in the bread and wine, and that at the moment in the Mass when the priest repeated the words of Christ to his disciples, *Hoc est corpus meum*, "This is my body," a miracle took place. What had once been bread became the body of Christ. Likewise, the wine became the blood of Christ.

The miracle of the Mass

The task of explaining just what happened during the Mass was long and difficult, but at last medieval theologians developed the doctrine of *transubstantiation*. They taught that every material object has various observable qualities (shape, size, weight, taste, color, etc.), which they called "accidents," but that behind these "accidents" lay a "substance" which could never be observed or measured, yet which made a thing what it was. It was conceded that the accidents

Transub- stantiation

of the bread and wine remained exactly the same after consecration as before, but it was taught that their substance was miraculously changed at the priest's words of consecration. Whether he could follow this metaphysical explanation or not, the ordinary Christian believed that a mighty miracle took place before his eyes every Sunday.

**The
forgiveness
of sins**

The sacrament of penance brought the forgiveness of sins. The church claimed this power to forgive sins on the basis of a text in the Gospel (Matt. 16:19) in which it is recorded that Jesus said to Peter, "I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." As this verse comes immediately after the other famous verse, "Thou art Peter, and on this rock will I build my church"—the verse that has been made the foundation of the Petrine theory justifying papal supremacy in the church—the whole passage was regarded as having the highest importance. The word "loose" in this text came to be interpreted as referring to the punishment for sins, and the whole passage was taken as reporting how Jesus conferred upon Peter and his successors the power to forgive sins.

Penance

The early Christians watched the conduct of their fellows most carefully, and some authorities held that persons guilty of grave offenses (such as murder or adultery or denying Christ in time of persecution) should be excluded from the church for the rest of their lives. Other Christians, usually including the leaders of the Roman Church, were inclined to be more lenient and showed a greater readiness to receive back those who had sinned but who, being sincerely sorry, were willing to make amends as best they could. At first the church might insist upon a public confession of faults before receiving back a penitent, but even in late Roman times private confession to a priest was considered adequate. Thus the medieval form of the sacrament of penance gradually developed. When this evolution was complete, the first step for the penitent was "contrition"—before all else he must be truly sorry for what he had done. The second step was confession to a priest. The priest pronounced "absolution"—or forgiveness—after indicating something which the penitent must do in satisfaction for his sin. Only when the satisfaction had been performed was the sacrament complete and the sin forgiven. The penances imposed usually took the form of prayers, visits to churches, pilgrimages, or financial contributions to charitable enterprises, and they were known technically as "good works."

Purgatory and Indulgences

Upon the relatively simple foundation of this doctrine of penance the theologians of the Middle Ages erected a complicated superstructure of doctrines that eventually came to have great historic importance. First came the doctrine of purgatory. It was held that the rather mild penances imposed by the priest in the confessional did not completely atone for the misdeeds of the penitent but merely showed his firm resolve to do what he could to make amends. A lifetime of penance could not make up for certain grave sins, yet if the sinner was truly penitent, he should be forgiven. Theologians therefore decided that there must be opportunities for further penance after death, in a place between heaven and hell which they called "purgatory." Here repentant sinners might complete the penance they had begun during life, and thus eventually reach heaven.

Purgatory

Even purgatory was not enough, however. Living friends of a deceased person sometimes wanted to help his soul in purgatory. To meet this need, the church taught that "good works" (in the technical sense of the words, mentioned above) might be transferred from one person's account to another's. A person might thus help a departed friend by his prayers and charitable works. Unfortunately, however, most people had no great oversupply of good works after settling their own accounts. Again the church came to their aid, this time with its teaching about the "treasury of good works." It taught that, while ordinary men may have few good works to spare, the saints and martyrs were more fortunate, and that, above all, the voluntary sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross had created an inexhaustible supply of good works which the church—i.e., the pope—had at its disposal.

**The
treasury of
good works**

The doctrine of the treasury of good works was closely connected with that of indulgences. Since the church had this unlimited supply of good works at its disposition, it could grant them as it wished to persons who had served it well. Popes therefore began to issue "indulgences," drawing upon the treasury of good works and transferring credits to particular individuals. Indulgences were of various kinds, some relieving the penitent sinner of a certain time in purgatory while others, called "plenary indulgences," wiped the slate clean at once. When Pope Urban II was organizing the First Crusade, he promised a plenary indulgence to every man who took the cross.

Indulgences

Later popes granted indulgences to those whose financial contributions helped defray the cost of the crusades. Still others granted indulgences to anyone who made exceptional financial contributions to the church, and before the end of the thirteenth century the simple sale of indulgences had become a major source of papal revenue.

**Abuse of
indulgences**

Theologians and other informed persons knew that an indulgence did the sinner no good unless he had first gone through the sacrament of penance, with contrition, confession, and absolution. Ignorant persons often overlooked these technicalities however, and jumped to the conclusion that if they paid a little money for an indulgence they were sure to enter heaven immediately after death. Moreover, popes often employed agents to peddle indulgences, and unscrupulous salesmen did not always bother to enlighten ignorant customers as to the true nature and value of their wares. They did not "read the fine print"—as we say today. The resulting scandals were made much of during the Protestant revolt in the sixteenth century, but almost a hundred years before Martin Luther was born, the English poet Geoffrey Chaucer, in his *Canterbury Tales*, had some wonderful fun at the expense of a swindling pardoner, letting him boast of his large income after preaching a sermon on the text "The love of money is the root of all evil," and commenting sardonically upon his large wallet "bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot."

**Minor
church
services**

While church life in the Middle Ages centered around these seven sacraments, they were by no means the whole of it. The elaborate Mass, as has been explained, was a glorification of the sacrament of the Eucharist, and Mass was celebrated in every church every Sunday. But there were other services as well, especially in the larger churches and the monastery chapels. The "canonical hours" provided brief services seven times a day, from matins early in the morning to vespers and compline late in the evening. The church also provided sermons to instruct and edify the faithful, and there were countless minor cults and ceremonies.

**Sacred
relics**

Medieval men often revered relics of the saints or of Biblical characters. Some relics were trivial and of local reputation only, but others were famous and their shrines were visited by crowds of pilgrims from all over Europe. Unfortunately, however, most of these relics were of very doubtful authenticity. Especially famous were the bones of St. James at Compostela in Spain, the Crown of Thorns in Paris, the bones of the Three Magi at Cologne. There were so many pieces

of the True Cross that apologists sometimes said that every time a piece was cut off the Cross a new one miraculously grew in its place; and skulls, each purporting to be that of St. John the Baptist, were exhibited in several cities simultaneously.

More important than this reverence for relics was the invocation of the saints. Thousands of saints were revered and called upon for aid. God might perhaps seem too abstract and too far away for the average sinner, but the saints were always present and ready to help. Some of the saints were the great founders of Christian churches, such as St. Peter and St. Paul; others were champions of the church, either in ancient times or recently, such as St. Thomas à Becket of Canterbury, who had been murdered during a controversy with Henry II of England. Still other saints were local and largely legendary heroes, known only in their own communities. These saints were an ever present help in time of danger, especially in time of danger from the wiles of Satan and the legions of his evil spirits which in those days compassed men about on every side.

*Invocation
of saints*

Most important of all was the reverence paid to the Virgin Mary. The story of how this came about is long and interesting, and though we must omit it here, we cannot neglect saying that this reverence for the Virgin did much to refine life in the generally crude and brutal Middle Ages, that it presented high ideals of womanhood at a time when they were sorely needed, and that it inspired much of the glorious religious art of the thirteenth century. A distinguished American historian and critical thinker, Henry Adams, remarked shortly after 1900 that the cult of the Virgin was as characteristic of the Middle Ages as was the dynamo of the dawning twentieth century.

*Reverence
paid the
Virgin Mary*

30. PIETY AND HERESY

*The good
life*

EVERY account of the medieval church must ask, What did medieval Christians deem the good life to be? Hints as to their ideas on the subject may be gathered from the literature of the time and from the lives of actual persons who were widely accepted as spiritual heroes worthy of emulation. For this purpose the popular lives of saints should not be taken too seriously. Thousands of legends unctuously related the marvelous works of minor saints who owed their reputations to their frequent reenactments of famous Biblical miracles or to new ones. If some of them now seem rather puerile, we must remember that these stories were invented for the edification of children and very ignorant persons, and that their heroes exemplified the ideals of intelligent people in the Middle Ages to about the same extent that characters in the comic strips represent the ideals of twentieth-century America. Nevertheless, some of these legendary saints received wide acclaim, as was the case with St. Denis, whose notoriety sprang from the fact that he allegedly went right on preaching after being beheaded by a Roman emperor. He became the patron saint of France, his monastery near Paris served as burial place for the French kings until the nineteenth century, and countless French churches today are adorned with statues, showing the saint carrying his head in his two hands or under his arm.

*Legends
of the
Holy Grail*

Loftier expressions of the idealism of the Middle Ages are to be found in the medieval romances, some of which will be discussed in the next chapter. Their characters seem to have more flesh and blood than the legendary saints, and heroes such as Roland, Tristram, King Arthur and his Knights—Gawain, Lancelot, Galahad, and Percival—well portray what many medieval adults thought a superior man

should be. Above all, perhaps, we should turn to the legends clustering around the Holy Grail—the eup from which Jesus and his disciples reputedly drank at the Last Supper. The story said that this eup had been carefully preserved for a time, and that, though it eventually was lost, men continued to hope that it might be found again. In the romances, many noble knights undertook the quest, but it was believed that the Grail could be found only by a man of the purest character. Scholars today believe that these legends of a sacred quest go back to Celtic tales of pre-Christian times, yet in their medieval forms they present a thoroughly Christian view of life. In one version of the story, the great champion Lancelot went in quest of the Grail. Being the lover of Queen Guinevere he obviously was unfitted for the task, but his son, Galahad—ascetic, chaste, almost as much a monk as a warrior—eventually was successful. The other great hero to see the Grail was Percival, a man of great simplicity who found wisdom through suffering. Needless to say, these stories should be studied in their medieval forms, not in the adulterated nineteenth-century versions found in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* or Wagner's operas.

Medieval Saints

Better yet for our purposes are the lives of actual persons who were widely hailed at the time as incarnating the medieval ideal of piety. A few such men deserve brief mention. St. Peter Damiani was born at Ravenna early in the eleventh century, perhaps in 1007. After receiving what was then considered a good literary education, he was for several years a successful teacher, but about 1035 he decided to become a monk. His zeal for torturing his body with fasts, vigils, long prayers, abstinences, and floggings brought his monastery high renown and he was elected its abbot. He was a powerful preacher, speaking plainly and directly, often abusively (he once confessed in a letter that scurrility had always been his besetting sin), but most effectively. He vigorously denounced the vices of the clergy, especially simony and marriage, and though he died in 1072, a year before Gregory VII became pope, he must be given some credit for the extensive reforms associated with that pope's name. Much against his will he was named bishop of Ostia (1057), he became one of the first cardinals, and he was employed by several popes for delicate diplomatic missions. In spite of these successes, however, Damiani continued to insist that only the life of a hermit

**St. Peter
Damiani**

could bring moral perfection or true happiness. In 1067 he was permitted to resign all his ecclesiastical honors and return to his old monastery.

**St. Bernard
of
Clairvaux**

St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153) was an even greater figure. The son of a knight who lost his life while on the First Crusade, Bernard belonged to a well-to-do family of Burgundy. As a young man he entered the recently founded Cistercian order, along with thirty relatives and friends whom he had persuaded to accompany him. A few years later, in 1115, he was sent to found a new monastery at Clairvaux (in eastern France, near the Swiss frontier), over which he presided as abbot. He ruled his monks with great rigor, insisting upon extreme austerities by all, yet his fame was so great that novices flocked in from far and near. During his life he sent out no less than sixty-five bands of his monks to establish new monasteries elsewhere.

**His
varied
career**

All his life Bernard was first and foremost a monk and an advocate of monasticism, but his restless energy carried him into many another field of activity. He was one of the great preachers of the Middle Ages, able to reach persons on every level of intelligence and in all stations of life. He was an unrelenting foe of heretics such as Arnold of Brescia and Abelard (see below, page 569), he succeeded in healing a papal schism of several years standing, and he was the chief instigator of the ill-starred Second Crusade (1147), whose failure was the great disappointment of his life. He drew up a rule for the Knights Templar, and he was the friend and adviser of popes and kings. He conducted a wide correspondence (five hundred of his letters survive), he composed several theological treatises, he published many sermons, of which the most famous are the eighty-six which interpret the Biblical book "The Song of Songs," and he wrote hymns, several of which are still in use, among them the well-known "Jesus, the very thought of Thee with sweetness fills the breast." As a thinker he was perhaps not equal to the best of his day, but his zeal, his energy, and his noble character produced works which have placed St. Bernard among the most famous saints of the twelfth century.

**St. Francis
of Assisi**

Of all the medieval saints, none has been more highly or more widely esteemed than St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226). The son of a wealthy merchant, Francis at first led the normal life of a rich young man, but when a little over twenty years old he underwent a deep religious conversion. He took to wife "Lady Poverty," and the

remainder of his life he devoted to her service. Refusing to accept money or even clothing from his family, he begged his way through central Italy, preaching informally and doing whatever he could to help the poor and the sick, especially the lepers. Disciples gathered around him. When the band numbered twelve, they went to Rome, where Innocent III authorized Francis to continue his work (1209). Like many medieval men, Francis dreamed of preaching the Gospel to the Moslems, and he accompanied the unlucky Fifth Crusade to Egypt (1219-1220). Unlike many other saints, however, Francis was by no means a gloomy ascetic. He constantly urged his disciples to be "joyful in the Lord." He did not shun the "world," which he regarded as an earthly paradise, and he felt a kinship with every living thing, speaking of his "brother wolf" and calling the birds his "sisters." Two years before his death Francis and a few close disciples withdrew to a mountaintop for prayer and fasting, at the close of which he beheld a vision of the Crucifixion. It is said that thereafter his hands bore the marks of nails driven through them: these "stigmata" have been much discussed, by believers and by critics, by psychologists, and by students of psychosomatic medicine. Francis certainly deserves his fame. No one, it has been said, ever tried so hard to follow the teachings of the Gospels literally, and no one ever succeeded so well. In the words of another writer, Francis discovered the Gospels anew, and for a brief moment central Italy saw a renewal of the enthusiasm of apostolic times.

At first Francis did not organize his followers as a new monastic order, but they soon were so numerous that some sort of regulation became necessary. As early as 1209 he drew up rules of a sort, and after more than one revision he gave them their final form in 1223. These rules enjoined upon his disciples complete poverty, begging, preaching, and care for the poor. In 1212 he added a "second order" for women. The Franciscan nuns are sometimes called "Poor Clares," from their first leader, St. Clara (1194-1253). Several years later, in 1221, came the "third order," for lay men and women who did not take the three monastic vows but who, while following their customary occupations, strove to conduct their lives according to Franciscan principles.

Disputes arose in the order soon after the death of Francis, some members wishing to adhere closely to his rule while others became lax and branched out into other forms of activity. The strict Franciscans came to be called Spirituals, the others Conventuals. Though the

**The
Franciscan
order**

**Spiritual
Franciscans**

Conventuals were much the more numerous, and eventually absorbed the whole order, the Spirituals continued for many years to persevere in the spirit of St. Francis. Even before the death of Francis the order had spread to most of the countries of western Europe, but throughout the thirteenth century it remained especially strong in Italy. Toward the middle of the century, the Franciscans led a spiritual revival that swept the peninsula, sometimes arousing highly emotional demonstrations.

Hymns and Prophecies

**Medieval
hymn
writers**

Another side of medieval piety may be seen in the hymns and other religious poetry composed during the Middle Ages. Thousands of these hymns have been preserved, some of them being quite famous and still in use in Catholic and Protestant churches. Mention has already been made of the hymns of St. Bernard, many of which deal with the sufferings of Christ or the vanity of this world. Two of the most famous hymns of the Middle Ages are attributed to early Spiritual Franciscans. Thomas of Celano (c. 1200-1255), an early companion and biographer of Francis, is credited with the *Dies irae, dies illa*, "The day of wrath, that dreadful day," which presents a sobering picture of the Last Judgment. Another Franciscan, Jacopone da Todi (1230-1306), author of the *Stabat Mater* so often set to music by great masters, wrote of the sorrows of Mary at the foot of the Cross. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), the greatest of medieval theologians (see page 571), also composed hymns, among them the Hymn to the Blessed Eucharist, *Adoro te devote, latens Deitas*, "Kneeling I adore Thee, Deity unseen."

**Bernard
of Cluny**

Another type of religious poetry may be seen in the long poem *De Contemptu Mundi*, composed about 1150 by Bernard of Cluny (not to be confused with St. Bernard). This masterpiece opens with the ominous words, *Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt, vigilemus*, "These latter times are very evil, let us be on our guard!" The poet then proceeds through almost three thousand lines of verse to berate the corruptions of his age, which include almost everything from the pope and emperor down. Nothing in this world is above his contempt, and his bitter scorn and satire are relieved only by his rapturous descriptions of heaven. A few lines of this section of the poem have been translated into our popular hymn "Jerusalem the Golden, with milk and honey blest."

The title of Bernard's poem, *De Contemptu Mundi*, was a popular one in the Middle Ages. Countless persons wrote books, poems, sermons, or tracts on this fascinating theme, and even so worldly a prelate as Pope Innocent III had published a book on the subject in his youth. In fact, St. Francis made himself conspicuous by his failure to join the chorus, which failure on his part is sometimes taken as an indication that the Middle Ages were already waning and that a new, more worldly era was beginning.

**De
Contemptu
Mundi**

The reasons for this medieval pessimism regarding the world are not far to seek. The world that followed the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West was in truth very evil; "Plague, pestilence, and famine, battle and murder, and sudden death" were matters of everyday occurrence; and there seemingly was little or nothing that men could do about it. Though conditions improved in the eleventh century, and great progress was made in the twelfth and thirteenth, medieval habits of thought, dating from the long and dreadful depression, had by this time become firmly set. Men and governments actually improved conditions, but churchmen continued to repeat the old phrases and the old consolations. Moreover, some churchmen were actually distressed that men turned their attention to such mundane matters and deplored the increasing worldliness of the times.

**Medieval
pessimism**

If a man found that the world was intolerably evil, he could enter a monastery, or he could look forward to heaven, or he could hope that God would intervene dramatically to make this world better. Ever since New Testament times there had been prophets in the church who foretold such divine intervention, especially in connection with the Second Coming of Christ (see page 268). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries prophecies of this sort became increasingly common, and large numbers of persons believed that wonderful things were about to happen. Here we can mention only one of many such prophets.

**Prophets of
the Second
Coming**

Joachim of Floris (1145-1202) was born in Calabria—the "toe" of Italy—the son of an official employed by the Norman king. At this corner of the world three great religions and three great civilizations came into frequent contact. The majority of the people adhered to the Latin Church, but there were Greek monasteries looking to the patriarch at Constantinople for spiritual leadership, and Islam was still active in nearby Sicily. As a young man, Joachim started on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land with several companions, but when they

**Joachim
of Floris**

found the plague raging in Constantinople, the companions turned back. Joachim persevered, reached Palestine, fell sick, was nursed back to health by a Moslem, and before returning home fasted for forty days on Mount Tabor (near Nazareth), during which time he first saw the vision of a transfigured Christianity. Back in Italy, he entered a monastery perched high in the mountain fastnesses of Calabria, and there he wrote his books explaining the Biblical Apocalypse and setting forth his own views as to the impending consummation of all things.

**His
"Eternal
Gospel"**

Like many such prophets, Joachim believed that world history fell into various periods, and he found evidence to suggest that the existing one was drawing to a close. In his opinion, world history was to be divided into three eras, each dominated by one Person of the Trinity. The first age, beginning with Abraham, was under God the Father; the second, beginning with the foundation of Christianity, was led by God the Son; and the third, which was about to begin, would be inspired by the Holy Ghost. The first patriarchal age had been dominated by kings and the second by priests, but the third would be characterized by complete liberty. Then Latins and Greeks, Jews and Moslems, would unite to follow what Joachim called the "Eternal Gospel." As the first age had been prepared by the long history of the world from Adam to Abraham, and the second had been foretold by the Hebrew prophets, so the third was being prepared by the monks, beginning with St. Benedict. Joachim apparently believed that the new age would begin in 1260, but it might come even sooner. Though a man of great independence of thought, Joachim was thoroughly medieval in his outlook, and in his new age the whole world would be one enormous monastery.

**Prophecies
and utopias**

Joachim's writings attracted great attention in his day, and after his death they were widely circulated by the Spiritual Franciscans. These men developed and expanded his ideas, turning them in new directions and giving them a new social importance by painting the new age in Franciscan colors. Countless other prophets of this sort arose, whose importance in history should not be underestimated. Throughout the waning Middle Ages such men were very active, but in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they were supplanted by the writers of utopias. The utopias, in their turn, brought into being the social reformers of modern times who have sought more worldly ways to remold society nearer to the heart's desire.

MEDIEVAL HERESY

The medieval church was usually successful in its efforts to control and direct the religious life of western Europe. When critics complained of abuses, or inspired preachers proclaimed new ideas, the church found ways to turn them to its advantage, as with Peter Damiani and Bernard of Cluny on the one hand or Joachim of Floris and Francis of Assisi on the other. But sometimes the church could not absorb the new ideas, or else its slowness caused the reformers to lose patience. This was especially the case in the twelfth century. The rise of towns and the revival of trade had brought far-reaching social changes that touched almost every aspect of medieval life and raised grave problems for the church. Sometimes these problems were primarily social, especially those concerning the poor in the towns, but sometimes they dealt with new ideas. In each case the church was slow to act, partly perhaps because nearly all its high officials, being men drawn from the feudal aristocracy, looked at the world through feudal spectacles and were not well informed as to what was happening in the new world of the communes. At any rate, others saw more quickly than they that something was wrong. At first the church officials would not listen to such warnings, and sometimes innovators were condemned as heretics.

The church had always been distressed by heretics who, for one reason or another, refused to accept its teachings on some seemingly important matter. In the century after Constantine, when Christians controlled the government of the Roman Empire, many harsh laws were enacted and people were occasionally executed for heresy. Sometimes their heresies concerned practices, more frequently they centered around theological doctrines, but all the important heresies eventually included more fundamental matters as well. Thus, in the fourth century, Donatism was originally a question of practice (strictness or leniency in forgiving persons who had denied Christ in time of persecution) while Arianism concerned theology (see page 327). Before long, however, it appeared that in the main the Donatists of Africa sprang from the lower classes, being largely of Punic or Afriean descent and speaking Punic, while the orthodox were the Romanized Latin-speaking upper classes; in the East, the Arians were recruited largely among the Greek upper classes while

**New
problems
and new
ideas**

**Social
basis of
heresy**

the followers of Athanasius were Orientals, but in the West the old Romans were orthodox while the barbarian Goths were Arian. These quarrels therefore covered more than mere theology. Rival social groups were engaged in a mighty struggle for power within the church.

**Definition
of a
heretic**

The medieval church usually laid even greater stress upon its unity than it did upon the accuracy of its theology. A heretic, in its eyes, was not primarily a man whose theology was mistaken, for many points in theology were not yet clearly defined. The dangerous heretic was one who made his erroneous ideas an excuse for attacking the church. Thus St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who always was quick to brand his opponents as heretics, went wrong himself on more than one point in theology, and even the mighty St. Thomas Aquinas erred on occasion. Likewise, mere criticism of the church organization did not make a man a heretic. A St. Peter Damiani might castigate the clergy in unmeasured language, or an emperor might wage war upon the pope and set up an antipope of his own, but such persons acted as members of the church which they wished to reform or dominate. If, as we say, a man "had his heart in the right place"—in other words, if he was conspicuously loyal to the church—he could permit himself wide freedom in his criticisms and intellectual speculations. But if he broke away from the church, defied its authorities, and attacked it from the outside, and if he then used new and strange theological doctrines to justify his attacks—as such persons usually did—he became a heretic and his doctrines were quickly condemned as heretical. But it was only in time of crisis, when the position of their church seemed endangered, that medieval churchmen engaged in hysterical heresy hunts. Mention of a few heresies famous in the Middle Ages will be enough to show how they developed and how they were combated.

Waldensians and Albigensians

**A new
spirit in
the towns**

It is a mistake to assume that everyone—or nearly everyone—in the Middle Ages was a devout and pious person. There were always many people who took their religion very lightly and many who made jest of holy things. The popular poetry and songs of the age were filled with ridicule of the clergy and parodies of church ritual. This anticlerical feeling was strongest in the towns, where it was intensified by the fact that the communes had frequently been

forced to fight hishops, or even the pope himself, to maintain their liberties. In a larger way, it may be said that the whole spirit and temper of town life differed as widely from that of a monastery as it did from that of a village. As the towns were filled with beggars on the verge of starvation, it was not surprising that some should cast envious eyes upon the wealth of churches and monasteries, and that anticlerical political leaders, such as Arnold of Breseia (see page 478), should talk of forcibly purifying the church and bringing her back to the glorious days of her "apostolic poverty" by distributing her wealth among the poor. It was by remarks such as this that Arnold became a heretic.

Peter Waldo was a rich merchant of Lyons, France, who about 1170 underwent conversion, distributed his property to the poor, and began preaching. As he was not an ordained priest, the bishop and even the pope ordered him to desist, but Waldo ignored the order, continued his preaching, and organized his followers as the "Poor Men of Lyons"—a group not unlike the early Franciscans, who came half a century later. This organization spread rapidly through southern France and northern Italy. At first Waldo entertained no heretical doctrines, but persecution drove his followers into strong anticlerical positions, and they developed radical views regarding the church, the clergy, and the Christian life. They insisted that everyone—men and women alike—had the right to preach, and they sought to make men independent of the clergy by denying Catholic doctrines regarding transubstantiation, penance, and purgatory. They became careful students of the Gospels, from which they learned pacifism and other extreme doctrines. They have been called the first Protestants, but in an even truer sense they may be called precursors of St. Francis, for the line separating heretics from saints is sometimes very narrow. On several occasions the popes launched crusades against these Waldensians—one such massacre, in 1654, inspired Milton's powerful sonnet beginning, "Avenge, O Lord, Thy slaughtered saints"—but in Italy the heretics persevered and a few thousand Waldensians still dwell in Alpine valleys near the French frontier.

**Peter
Waldo**

Another group of heretics were called "Albigensians." The name is derived from the town of Albi, in southern France, where heretics of this school were particularly strong, but they called themselves "Cathari," meaning the "Pure Ones." They resembled the Waldensians in many respects, but they also showed wide differences. The origins of Albigensianism are still shrouded in mystery. There can

**Albigen-
sians**

be little doubt that they were deeply influenced by the ideas of the Manicheans of the late Roman Empire—in whose errors even the great St. Augustine was entangled for a while—but the continuity of the sect in the West from ancient times cannot be proved. Perhaps small groups of Manicheans survived the Dark Ages in out-of-the-way corners, but modern scholars usually prefer to believe that the heresy was reintroduced into Europe from the East by traders and pilgrims in the eleventh century. In any case, it spread rapidly through southern France in the twelfth century. In Languedoc it was protected by the powerful counts of Toulouse, and there it apparently won a majority of the population.

**Their
theology
and or-
ganization**

The complicated oriental theology of the Albigensians postulated two supreme powers, one good and one evil, God and Satan. The latter was identified with the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the pope and the Catholic clergy were declared to be his worshipers. The Albigensians claimed that they, and they alone, worshiped the one true God. The manner of life prescribed for the faithful was so austere that few could attain it. Albigensians were therefore divided into two groups, a few *perfecti*, who led this higher life, and a multitude of *credentes* ("believers"), who were not yet ready to assume so difficult a burden. Like many other medieval heretics, the Cathari attributed the scandalous corruption of the Catholic clergy to excessive wealth; and the heresy appealed strongly to the nobility of southern France when it encouraged them to purify the church by relieving it of this wealth. The men who seized the wealth need not distribute it among the poor, as Arnold of Breseia and the Waldensians had taught, but might keep it for themselves—provided of course that they felt morally strong enough to resist the temptations it would undoubtedly bring. A surprisingly large number of Cathari were willing to assume this risk, and the church trembled for her possessions. Nevertheless, the rank and file of the Albigensians were serious and sober folk whose austere morality was frequently superior to that of their orthodox opponents.

**Innocent III's
crusade
against
them**

The church found it very difficult to stamp out this nefarious heresy. When preaching proved powerless against it, and when excommunication and interdicts were found equally ineffective, Innocent III decided to launch a general crusade against the Albigensians (1208). As Philip Augustus, king of France, refused to have any share in the enterprise, leadership fell to a French knight—Simon de Montfort, father of the man who later helped found the English

parliament. Simon was a high-minded though fanatical idealist, but the pope helped him raise an army by turning the tables on the Albigensians and promising the crusaders that they might keep whatever lands they seized. A wild horde of pious and avaricious warriors swooped down upon unhappy Languedoc, and as the Cathari did not share the evangelical pacifism of the Waldensians, years of bitter fighting ensued. Eventually the heretics were defeated, and in 1229 Languedoc was annexed to France (see page 493).

St. Francis certainly gave little thought to the suppression of heresy, yet he and his Franciscans were a major factor in checking the spread of Waldensian and similar troubles. They appealed to the same class of persons as the Waldensians, and their appeals were more effective. Countless persons who might otherwise have strayed into heresy now became Franciscans, or at least found satisfaction as members of the "third order," and therefore remained loyal Catholics. Yet even the Franciscans sometimes fell under suspicion. St. Francis managed to remain in the good graces of the church, and the Conventuals caused little trouble, but the Spirituals embarrassed the church greatly by preaching that Christ and his apostles had lived in complete poverty. Within a hundred years of their founder's death, Spiritual Franciscans were being burned at the stake as heretics.

**Franciscans
and heretics**

The case was different with St. Dominic (1170–1221), the Spanish founder of the Dominican order. Having received a good education, Dominic was sent in 1205 to preach among the Albigensians of Languedoc. He became convinced that this heresy could best be checked by raising intellectual standards among the Catholic clergy, and to this end he founded the Dominican order in 1215. Like Francis, he insisted that his followers live in poverty, begging their way, but unlike Francis—who held book learning in low esteem—Dominic laid great emphasis upon education. He and his followers probably led few Albigensians back into the Catholic fold, and the heresy was liquidated by the crusaders rather than by the friars. Nevertheless, Dominic and the Dominicans, like Francis and the Franciscans, undoubtedly prevented many Catholics from falling into heresy. In later years the Dominicans became great champions of orthodoxy, often calling themselves *Domini canes*—"watchdogs of the Lord." They even became prominent professors of theology in the universities, the great St. Thomas Aquinas being one of their number.

St. Dominic

The Inquisition

Efforts to stamp out heresy

The various heresies prevalent early in the thirteenth century caused the church to standardize its methods of discovering and punishing heretics, which in turn led to the establishment of the Inquisition. Various Roman emperors, especially Theodosius I, had declared heresy to be a capital crime, but the more intelligent Christians of antiquity, such as St. Augustine, preferred that heretics be argued with and, if obdurate, be given spiritual penances or perhaps be fined, but nothing more. In the early Middle Ages the higher clergy usually took the same attitude, and even so redoubtable a foe of heresy as St. Bernard went no further. In their sermons, however, these men inveighed so bitterly against heretics that their more bloodthirsty hearers, whose love of theological truth was emotional rather than rational, sometimes invoked violent measures to rid the world of these pestilential fellows. When heretics were few in number and unpopular, they frequently suffered from lynch law. The secular governments then intervened with severe laws against heresy, partly to preserve the peace, partly to prevent dissensions among the people, partly to pay off old debts to the church. The Emperor Frederick II, who was himself often accused of "atheism" by clerical critics, was one of the first to make heresy a capital offense, but other Christian sovereigns quickly followed his example.

Inquisitors

Meantime the church was developing its machinery for deciding whether or not a man was a heretic. At first this duty had fallen to the bishops, but as these officials frequently had neither the skill nor the means nor even the desire to judge carefully (several bishops in Languedoc had become Albigensians), the popes began sending out men of their own, known as "inquisitors," to perform the task. In 1233 Gregory IX announced that thereafter the inquisitors would be chosen from the Dominican order, and during the next few years elaborate rules were issued for their guidance.

Methods of the Inquisition

These rules have often been criticized as making trials under the Inquisition a travesty of justice. The proceedings were secret, with the judge also serving as accuser; the accused man was never confronted with the witnesses against him, or with their testimony; he was not allowed counsel, and witnesses who defended him were themselves suspected of heresy; and the testimony of two witnesses

—even heretics, criminals, or young children—was enough to convict. In 1252 Innocent IV approved the use of torture to procure confessions from suspected heretics. A confession wrung from the accused in the torture chamber had to be repeated “freely” the next day, but the unfortunate man knew that if he failed to repeat it, he would be sent back to the torturers. If the accused confessed at once, and especially if he implicated several other persons, he might get off with a long period of penance and the confiscation of his property, but extreme cases were punished with death by burning at the stake. As church officials might not shed blood, the convicted heretic was handed over to the “secular arm”—the officials of the state—for execution. In characteristic style the inquisitors always urged mercy, though everyone knew that, should a secular judge actually show mercy, he would be excommunicated at once and might even be accused of heresy himself.

Such being the nature of the Inquisition, we are not greatly surprised to find that grave abuses soon appeared. Even in the thirteenth century popes sometimes used the Inquisition to rid themselves of political enemies. Thus one pope accused Manfred of heresy and, when that emperor failed to appear for trial, had him condemned as a contumacious heretic (1266), thereby making the papal crusade against him appear somewhat more respectable (see page 482). Several years later Boniface VIII excommunicated the whole Colonna family as heretics, but the sentence was reversed when the head of that great family vindicated his orthodoxy by arresting the pope. In the frequent wars that disturbed Italy during the next two centuries, the popes used the Inquisition frequently to advance their personal or family interests, while antipapal writers sometimes charged the pope with being a heretic himself. Kings were equally quick to invoke so valuable an aid. When Philip IV of France decided to despoil the Templars, he first had them convicted of heresy, as well as of other crimes, after using extreme torture to secure confessions. More than a hundred years later the English used the same device to rid themselves of Joan of Arc—now St. Joan. Even private individuals found the Inquisition helpful, not only in liquidating enemies and rivals, but even in escaping from unprofitable contracts, for the church then taught that a Catholic need not keep faith with a heretic. A peculiarly gruesome aspect of the work of the Inquisition was its trial of persons already dead. Thus we have the record of one man who successfully broke a contract by inducing the Inquisi-

**Political
abuse
of the
Inquisition**

tion to convict the other party of heresy a full fifteen years after his death. It must be added, however, that the worst of the abuses which have given the Inquisition so bad a name became common only in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when the Middle Ages were tottering to an end and everything essentially medieval was falling into decay.

31. THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH

ENOUGH has now been said to show how widely the medieval church differed from its various modern successors. It was not a free association of persons united for worship and other religious activities. In fact, it was not a free association at all, and it did not limit its activities to the field of religion. It was the one great social institution in western Europe of which everybody (except the Jews) was a member, whether he wished to be or not. It was a Christian Commonwealth, the Holy Catholic Church, the true fatherland of every medieval Christian.

The idea of a Christian Commonwealth was not the creation of the Middle Ages, even though it reached its highest development at that time. If an early Christian had risen from the dead in the thirteenth century, he would certainly have been surprised and disgusted at many of the things he saw done by eminent churchmen, but he would have been delighted to see the church thus functioning as a commonwealth, and he would have recognized this Christian Commonwealth as something that Christians had hoped for ever since apostolic times. Even New Testament writers had suggested such a commonwealth, not always in heaven but here on earth as well. Paul had dreamed of one, and he made a brilliant start in organizing it.

Long before the time of Constantine, as we have seen, pagans had called the Christians a "third race," and Christians had willingly accepted the epithet for themselves. Judged by modern standards of nationality, the Christians really were a "nation" (see page 274). They had come to form an empire within the Roman Empire, for

*The church
as a social
institution*

*A Christian
Common-
wealth
on earth*

*Christianity
and the
Roman
Empire*

which reason the Roman government persecuted them. At last, however, the Emperor Constantine came to terms with this powerful society when he embraced Christianity. It would be nearer the truth, perhaps, to say that the Christians embraced Constantine and his empire. They then formed only a small minority of the population, but two or three centuries later nearly everyone in the empire was at least nominally a Christian. In the dark days following Pope Gregory I, church officials took over many functions of government in Rome, thus making the church the true successor of the Roman Empire in the West. Church and state were mingled in the Christianized Empire, and the two together formed the Christian Commonwealth.

The Church and Patriotism

The church as a state

An eminent British medievalist at the end of the nineteenth century (F. W. Maitland) used to insist that it is impossible to form a definition of the state that would not cover the medieval church. Perhaps the nature of this church will stand out more clearly if, avoiding all abstract speculations about the essence of sovereignty, we compare the powers and activities of the medieval church with those of a modern national state. More important still will be a comparison of the emotional attitude of a medieval Christian toward his church with that of a modern patriot toward his state. Around which institution, church or state, did the medieval Christian center his patriotic loyalty? Or, which institution was it to which he gave this loyalty? He gave it to the church, which was his true fatherland.

Men born Christians

In the first place, medieval men were born Christians, just as modern men are born Americans or Englishmen or Frenchmen. It is true that, technically speaking, men became Christians only by baptism, but ordinarily this sacrament was administered only a few days after birth, when the child could have no idea what was happening. When he became conscious of the world, several years later, he found himself a Christian without any specific action on his part, and such he continued throughout the remainder of his days. Of course a few people became Christians of their own free will in their adult years, by conversion from Judaism or Mohammedanism, and others did so against their wills because of military conquest. Some people change their nationality today for precisely the same reasons, but then as now, such cases were rather exceptional. The large number of naturalized Americans today is of course something unique in world history. In the thirteenth century the number of converts to

Christianity in England probably was even smaller than the number of naturalized Englishmen today.

As the medieval child grew older, he would find his church doing many things which the state does today, and on which the state even claims to exercise a monopoly. He would find, for example, that he had to pay taxes, or tithes, to the church whether he wished to or not. Church officials simply took a share of his crop, and he was punished severely if he resisted them. The church had courts whose jurisdiction covered a wide variety of civil and criminal matters. Any Christian might be hauled into these courts, which had the power to enforce their decisions. A special code of law, known as canon law, was used in the courts. Moreover, the church raised armies, sometimes of volunteers and sometimes of mercenaries, to fight the church wars that were called crusades. Sometimes these wars were fought in remote countries, such as Palestine; sometimes they were mere colonial expansion against pagans, like the wars of the Teutonic Knights in East Prussia; sometimes they were police action against such obstreperous Christians as the Emperor Frederick II; and sometimes they were virtually civil wars, as in the case of the Albigensian crusade. But in every case the high authorities of the church ordered and directed the crusades.

**Taxes,
courts,
armies**

In addition to these various activities, which we today would consider the function of the state, the church looked after education. Most schools today are operated by the state, and some patriotic enthusiasts would even give the state a monopoly on education. In the Middle Ages the church actually enjoyed such a monopoly, for it operated whatever schools existed. Many of the things taught were of course purely technical (reading, writing, arithmetic), but in a larger way medieval schools were especially concerned with making men into good Christians, just as it is often said today that schools should make them good citizens. Medieval schools were few in number, however, and most of the youths who attended them were preparing to enter the clergy. The rest of the population usually got what cultural education it possessed at church. The parish priest told his parishioners something about theology and philosophy, giving what seemed to them a satisfactory explanation of the world and its workings. He preached to them about morals and the things which he considered most worth while in life. From him they learned what little history they knew, with whatever he taught them calculated to increase their respect for the church. He told them that God

Education

made the world, that heaven should be their ultimate destination, and that the church provided them with the sole means of attaining this happy goal. The history he taught was sacred history, centering largely around the prophets, the life of Christ, the saints, and the great heroes of the church. History on a similar intellectual level today would center around a few great national heroes, with the emphasis upon moral edification and arousing enthusiasm for the country.

**Festivals
and shrines**

The greatness and glory of the church were impressed upon the minds of ordinary people in countless other ways as well. The great holidays were Christian festivals, commemorating the major events in Christian history, just as our great national holidays commemorate the great events in our national past. Men often made pilgrimages to local shrines, or perhaps to remoter but more famous ones, just as today thousands visit Mount Vernon or Gettysburg or Plymouth Rock. Others visited Rome in much the spirit in which many people today visit the city of Washington, anxious to see the spots where great things have been done and are still being done. Relics were as carefully preserved, and as piously viewed as are the original copies of our Declaration of Independence and Constitution. In fact, these reminders of the greatness of the church were so frequent and so persuasively effective that a sensitive person could scarcely avoid being proud of his church and enthusiastic about it. It was the greatest and finest thing that ever had been, and his intellectual world centered around it.

**Christian
imperialism**

Such being the case, it is not surprising that idealistic persons should wish to spread the blessings of Christianity far and wide. From the day of its birth Christianity had always been a missionary religion, which the great religions of classical antiquity had not been, and the so-called Dark Ages were a period of great church expansion in central and northern Europe. But it was not primarily Christian doctrine, or even a life directed according to the precepts of the Gospels, that was brought to the heathen by these medieval missionaries, especially by the more martial ones. It was membership in the Christian Commonwealth. These men fondly believed that all the blessings of the Christian way of life would automatically follow from membership in the church.

**Popular
indignation
at heresy**

The other side of this picture may be seen in the medieval church's treatment of heretics. Heretics were supposedly persons whose intellectual speculations had followed unorthodox paths and who had

thus fallen into grave theological error, but a solitary thinker was rarely bothered unless he was looking for trouble. Likewise scoffers could ridicule saints and holy matters with no worse punishment than head-shakings by the pious and sputterings by the exitable. But if the heretic successfully preached sweeping social changes, as the Albigensians did, extreme measures were invoked to suppress him. Such heretics usually expressed themselves in theological terms then, just as they commonly use economic terms today, but the popular indignation they aroused was the same.

Church and State

Much has been written about the conflict between church and state in the Middle Ages. It is a grave mistake, however, to regard the medieval church and the medieval state as two antagonistic organizations such as the early church and the Roman Empire had been. The conflict between them was no more fundamental than the contests between two political parties in our own day. Both parties were in agreement as to practically everything in the social organization of the Christian Commonwealth, and usually their differences as to fundamental policy were slight. The two parties quarreled principally over which of them was to have its leaders in supreme power. The Christian Commonwealth, or the Catholic Church, of which all men were members and to which the leaders of both parties professed the deepest loyalty, was much more than either faction, or than the two antagonists taken together, just as the United States is much more than Republicans plus Democrats.

One of these medieval political parties was headed by the various kings and princes and the emperor. Its strength lay with the feudal lords who, under the feudal system, were the great landholders, and, as land was then the principal form of wealth, it might be said that this party represented the organized economic interests of the day. It was comparable to the party of "Big Business" or of "Wall Street," but for reasons easily comprehensible to anyone who reads the history of the early Middle Ages it usually controlled the military forces, the police, and a few other government services. The rival party, led by the bishops, the priests, and the pope, may be called the clerical party. As it found its chief support among the peasantry and the simpler folk, it might perhaps be called the popular party. It too monopolized various government services, such as education.

**Church and
state as
political
parties**

**Personnel
of each
party**

Still other services, such as the administration of justice, were performed by both parties in rivalry, and both collected taxes to pay their expenses. This division of the field of government between two rival factions prevented domination by a theocratic absolutism of the Byzantine type, for which we all may be devoutly thankful, but it led instead to constant quarrels over jurisdiction and final authority. Throughout the Middle Ages the two parties contended with each other, sometimes using rational arguments and treatises on theology and law, sometimes using interdicts and edicts of outlawry, and sometimes using armies. But feudal lord and priest alike were members of the Holy Catholic Church, which was the fatherland of every medieval Christian.

**Papal
political
theory**

The legal and theological theories with which the two parties buttressed their positions show how close they stood to each other and the differences which separated them. The papal justification was the outcome of a long evolution. It rested in part upon the Petrine theory, which taught that the popes, being heirs of St. Peter, had inherited the primacy supposedly held by Peter among the apostles. Papal apologists later declared that when Christ said to Peter, "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven," he was granting the popes the power not only to forgive sins but also to veto all imperial legislation. Next came the alleged Donation of Constantine, fabricated in the eighth century, by which the first Christian emperor supposedly surrendered the rule of the West to the popes. In the tenth century the Cluniae reformers strove to magnify the powers of the pope, and in the eleventh Gregory VII asserted papal superiority vigorously by word and deed. Finally, the two famous bulls of Boniface VIII, *Clericis laicos* (1296) and *Unam sanctam* (1302), set forth papal claims in an extreme form. The earlier forbade secular authorities to tax church property and threatened all prelates who paid taxes with excommunication. The second, after defending papal supremacy at length, closed with the words "We declare, state, define, and pronounce that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human being to be subject to the Roman pontiff." Papal spokesmen always allowed the emperor a place in their scheme of things, however. Sometimes they spoke of the two swords, one spiritual and the other temporal, which represented spiritual and temporal authority, but with the temporal sword clearly under the spiritual. Others compared pope and emperor to sun and moon, with the latter only reflecting the light of the former.

Imperial apologists were equally ingenious. They claimed that the emperor was the successor of the Roman emperors of old, power having been transferred to him by God himself. He therefore received his power directly from God, just as the pope received his, and in extreme cases he might even intervene to reform what he considered a corrupt papacy. Imperial writers, too, spoke of the two swords, but they insisted that the two were equal in power and authority. The popes therefore should confine their activities to strictly spiritual matters, church lands should be taxed like all others, and criminal priests should be tried and judged in secular courts. In the days of Frederick Barbarossa and Frederick II, imperial partisans sometimes became as extreme as Boniface himself. One of the more famous defenses of imperial supremacy may be seen in the treatise *De monarchia* by the poet Dante, written about ten years after Boniface published his *Unam sanctam*. Here the papal arguments are skillfully reversed and made to support the emperor.

**Imperial
political
theory**

During most of the thirteenth century the papal party was very aggressive. Its carefully disciplined agents, who covered all western Europe, were directed with consummate skill from Rome. The secular powers, on the other hand, were so divided amongst themselves that an able diplomat, like Innocent III, could easily make them neutralize each other. By the end of the century, however, the situation was changing rapidly, and after the death of Boniface VIII (1303) the whole edifice collapsed. The secular rulers won such sweeping victories that the precarious balance of the two powers was completely destroyed. There were many reasons for this sharp reversal of fortune, two of which stand out above all others. The kings made alliances with the wealthy and rapidly advancing mercantile class, thus acquiring financial and military power which the popes could not resist, and secondly, they learned to exploit the rising spirit of nationalism, which worked against the international church. The patriotism of men swung from the church to their kings, and the Christian Commonwealth, deprived of the loyalty of its people, toppled over like a house of cards. But from that day to this it has remained a romantic dream, never quite forgotten.

**Victory of
the secular
powers**

THE JEWS IN THE MIDDLE AGES

No sketch of religious conditions in the Middle Ages is complete without some mention of the Jews then living in the West. This was a crucial period in Jewish history, highly interesting in itself, and

**Importance
of medieval
Judaism**

important because Jewish theologians and thinkers deeply influenced their Christian colleagues. And the treatment accorded Jews by their less intellectual Christian contemporaries throws a strong light upon the nature of the Christian Commonwealth.

*Oriental
Jews and
Moslems*

We have already seen that the diaspora, or "scattering," of the Jews began as early as the sixth century before Christ, when thousands of exiles were taken from Palestine to Babylonia and others fled to Egypt (see page 259). Though some of these exiles presently returned to Palestine, a majority remained in their new homes. The Persian, Greek, and Parthian empires protected these scattered Jews and enabled them to prosper, but the Sassanian, or Third, Persian Empire (dating from A.D. 226) was ruled by fanatical Zoroastrians who inflicted great hardships upon them. The Babylonian Jews therefore welcomed the Moslem armies in the seventh century. Again the Eastern Jews prospered, until the decline of the Abbassid dynasty in the eleventh century, and during this whole period Babylon was the most important Jewish center in the world.

*Jews in
the West*

In the centuries after Alexander the Great, Jews had entered the Greco-Roman world in great numbers. Alexandria in Egypt became their principal center, but even before the beginning of the Christian Era Jews were to be found in every part of the Roman Empire. There were Jews at Rome in the days of Cicero, and a hundred years later there were considerable Jewish colonies as far away as Gaul and Spain. In the last days of the Roman Empire, and under the subsequent barbarian kingdoms, Jews made up a large part of the merchant class in the West. The Moslem invasion of Spain in the eighth century was a great boon to the Jews, and the period of the Omniad dynasty in Spain (756-1031) is often considered the golden age of medieval Jewry. Enjoying great freedom throughout the peninsula, countless Jews then flocked to Toledo, Cordova, and the other great cities of Moslem Spain, where they sometimes became wealthy and prominent. Many were merchants and artisans, but others entered the higher professions. Jewish physicians became celebrated throughout the West, and Jewish financiers sometimes held high offices in the state. Even the gradual reconquest of Spain did not alter the happy state of the Jews at first, for the early Christian kings were glad to make use of their services. There were also large colonies of Jews in southern France and the Rhineland, and a few even reached England. Like their kinsmen in Spain, the earlier Jews were largely artisans and traders, but in the twelfth and thirteenth

centuries they became conspicuous as moneylenders, rivaling the Italians.

About a hundred years before the birth of Christ, Jewish leaders had decided exactly which books were to be regarded as inspired Scriptures and had given final form to the books thus selected. From that day to this all Jews have accepted the Hebrew Bible—the Christian Old Testament—as the final court of appeal in religious matters. Nevertheless, Jews continued to think and write upon religious themes, and a vast supplementary literature gradually arose. The written Law (Torah) was set forth in the first five books of the Old Testament, but from early times other laws regarding religious ritual and daily life had been passed down orally. During the two centuries before and after Christ, the rabbis (teachers) greatly developed this oral tradition, and about A.D. 200 they wrote out these other laws in the “Mishnah.”

**Bible and
Mishnah**

Speculation and writing did not cease even then, and the next few centuries saw the appearance of a vast quantity of new material, explaining and commenting upon the Torah and Mishnah. Eventually these new writings were collected in the enormous work now called the “Talmud,” which appeared in Babylonia about A.D. 500. The Talmud is a very confused collection of all sorts of literature: legal decisions, pointed or edifying sayings, commentaries upon the Scriptures, excerpts from sermons, stories and legends about the rabbis and other great men or about the angels and God himself. Much of it seems like dead wood now, but other parts are admired today by Jews and Christians alike.

Talmud

Even the Talmud was not enough, and during the Middle Ages Jewish scholars and rabbis wrote copiously to explain the Talmud. Much of this writing was done in the East, in the happy days of the Abbassids, but the West too produced its commentators. Perhaps the most famous was Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, commonly known as Rashi (1040–1105). Rashi spent most of his life at Troyes, in France, where he served as rabbi while earning a livelihood by tending his vineyard. Though no great original thinker, Rashi is famous for his commentaries on Scripture and especially for those on the Talmud. Standard editions of the Talmud still include these commentaries, which had a deep influence upon a few scholarly Christian writers of the late Middle Ages and upon the Protestant reformers.

Rashi

Far more important than Rashi was Moses Maimonides (1135–1204). A native of Cordova, his father provided him with teachers

Maimonides

who gave him an excellent general education—including an introduction to the Arabic commentators upon Aristotle—but who directed his attention especially to the Torah and the Talmud. When the fanatical Almohade dynasty put an end to Moslem toleration of Jews, Maimonides withdrew to Fez, about 1160, and five years later he proceeded to Cairo. His family fortune having been lost, he supported himself by practicing medicine, in which field his success was so great that he presently became personal physician to the great Saladin, enemy of the crusaders. His first book, an Arabic commentary on the Talmud, had been begun even before he left Spain, but his reputation rests largely upon his *Guide for the Perplexed*. Like his contemporary and fellow Cordovan, the Moslem philosopher Averroës (1126–1198; see page 319), Maimonides believed firmly that there could be no real conflict between reason and revealed religion. Making much use of Aristotle's scientific and metaphysical writings and the Arabic commentaries, as well as of the Old Testament and Talmud, he worked out an elaborate theory of the universe along purely rational lines. Maimonides is regarded as the greatest Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages, and his writings were carefully studied by the Christian scholastic theologians of the next century.

**Jews and
Arabic
learning**

Not all the Jewish writers of medieval Europe were theologians or philosophers. There were poets as well, some of whom wrote on highly secular themes while others composed religious poems that are still used in the ritual of the synagogue. More important than these poets, at least for the cultural history of Europe, were the countless obscure scholars who carried Arabic learning to Spain, helping Christian scholars learn Arabic or translating Arabic treatises into Latin. These Jews were the middlemen who brought a new learning to medieval Europe.

Christians and Jews

**The Jewish
religious
community**

Just as the patriotic emotions of medieval Christians attached themselves to the church, or the Christian Commonwealth, rather than to the kings and princes or to an abstraction known as their "country," and just as Moslems were patriotic to Islam, so medieval Jews centered their patriotism upon their religious community. This community could not be as closely organized as its rivals. Each town with an important Jewish population had its synagogue, however,

and a rabbi deeply read in the Scriptures and the Talmud. He was respected for his learning and piety, but he received no salary, and he was expected to earn his living as best he could. Each synagogue enjoyed great freedom, though of course each tried to follow the injunctions of the Mosaic Law. When differences arose, as was often the case, rabbis debated with each other, but there was no central authority to enforce strict uniformity of thought or practice. Only the strong loyalty of all Jews to the traditions of their fathers prevented serious schisms.

As the Jews had possessed no state of their own for many centuries, they had grown accustomed to being ruled by Gentiles, and in the Middle Ages their fondest dreams called only for being allowed to live according to their ancestral laws in exchange for paying taxes and not rebelling against the established secular authorities. At moments in the past this ideal had almost been realized. The early Persians had not bothered the Jews, and except in times of active rebellion the Romans had not. Even during the great rebellions of 66-70 and 115 and 135 they did not punish Jewish communities in peaceful parts of the Empire. Jews were even exempted by law from various services which they declared to be incompatible with their religion, such as oaths by the pagan gods or emperor worship. There was a certain amount of anti-Semitism, especially in Alexandria, but the imperial government usually did what it could to protect Jews from the fury of anti-Semitic mobs.

**Jews
ruled by
Gentiles**

The conversion of Constantine changed all this. The Christian emperors soon began issuing discriminatory laws against the Jews, forcing them to wear badges or distinctive clothing, permitting them to live only in certain parts of the city, called ghettos, and greatly limiting their right to build synagogues and their freedom of public worship. However, these laws were not always well enforced. The early Moslems perpetuated this system, applying the old discriminatory laws to Jews and Christians alike, but within a century the Jews had bought back their freedom by paying a special tax. The Jews in Spain had suffered severely under the Visigoths, but the Moslem conquest restored their religious freedom under taxation. In the days of Charlemagne, and for more than two centuries thereafter, Jews were not greatly bothered, even in the Christian West.

**Jews in
Christian
states**

The excitement attendant upon the crusades brought a tremendous upsurge of anti-Semitism. To many Christians it seemed stupid to go all the way to Palestine to butcher nonbelievers when so many

**Crusades
and anti-
Semitism**

could be found right at home. Every crusade was therefore accompanied by atrocious pogroms in western Europe, with the murder of hundreds or even thousands of Jews. It must be added, however, that the bishops and other high authorities usually did what they could to protect the Jews, even admitting crowds of them into their castles for shelter. On more than one occasion St. Bernard, the principal author of the Second Crusade, risked his life trying to restrain mobs engaged in massacring Jews—even though his own oratory was, in the final analysis, responsible for the mob: he had underestimated the power of his own eloquence and miscalculated its consequences. Out of these horrors sprang stories that have fed anti-Semitism ever since, such stories as those telling of the desecration of the Host or the slaying and ritual eating of Christian children at the Passover. St. Hugh of Lincoln was an English boy who allegedly met this cruel fate in 1255 and whose story was piously retold by Chaucer at the end of the fourteenth century and by the gentle Charles Lamb in the nineteenth.

Pogroms

The thirteenth century had even worse in store for the Jews. Innocent III induced the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) to reenact all the anti-Jewish legislation of the late Roman Empire, reestablishing ghettos and special clothing for Jews. Brutal kings, like John of England, seized Jewish property on the slightest pretext—or on none at all. Pogroms became common, even without crusading excitement to explain them, and sometimes they were instigated by parish priests or friars. Even so pious a man as St. Louis of France is reported by his devoted biographer to have remarked that while it might be worth while for a learned doctor to argue with a Jew, there was nothing for a pious Christian to do but run him through with a sword.

Expulsion of Jews

At the end of the thirteenth century a new phase of Jewish history began when Edward I of England ordered all Jews to leave his kingdom (1290). Within twenty-five years the king of France and several German princes had followed this example. Some of the exiled Jews went to Flanders or Spain, but the German Jews went in large numbers to Poland, where they were gladly received. In succeeding centuries, all these various manifestations of anti-Semitism were repeated and intensified, but later ages had little to add that was new. The pattern was set in the thirteenth century.

The Jewish problem

It must be admitted that the Jews formed a serious problem for those who believed firmly in the Christian Commonwealth. They

stubbornly refused to accept Christianity, which was regarded as the indispensable basis of all social order. They formed an empire within the Christian Commonwealth, just as the Christians had formed an empire within the Roman Empire. The Christians of the thirteenth century therefore accorded them exactly the same treatment that early Christians had received in the Roman Empire. Perhaps the Christians were more brutal than the Roman emperors had been—it was a more brutal age—but, like the emperors, they failed to destroy their victims. The story is not one of which Christians are likely to boast, yet it is hard to see how a rough people, proud of their theocratic state, could be expected to act otherwise. Unfortunately, pogroms and Inquisitions seem to be essential features of such theocratic and ideological states as the Christian Commonwealth of the Middle Ages.

XII

Sainte Chapelle (Culver)



INTELLECTUAL LIFE

THE THREAD OF LEARNING—MEDIEVAL LEARNING—
THE FINE ARTS AND LITERATURE

Period	Education	Theology	History	Science	Poetry	Art
Dark Ages (400-775) Barbarian invasions	Monasteries Benedict Boethius Cassiodorus Bede	Augustine Gregory I John of Damas- cus	Gregory of Tours Bede Einhard	Isidore of Seville	Beowulf	
Carolingian Renaissance (775-850)	Monastic schools [<i>trivium</i> and <i>quadrivium</i>] Alcuin					Feudal castles Monasteries Aachen
Dark Ages (850-1050) Rise of feudalism					Original Nibelungen	
Twelfth Century Renaissance (1050-1200) Rise of town life	Cathedral schools Latin classics Translations from Greek and Arabic	Anselm Abelard Peter Lombard	Nogent Otto of Freising William of Tyre	Translations: Aristotle Galen Euclid	Chansons de geste Roland Cid Traubadours Minnesingers	Romanesque churches and monasteries
Thirteenth Century (1200-1300) Apogee of the Middle Ages	Universities in their prime: Bologna Toulouse Salamanca Paris Oxford Cambridge	Bonaventura Thomas Aquinas	Villehardouin Matthew of Paris Joinville	Grasseteste Albertus Magnus Roger Bacon	Fabliaux Reynard Aucassin et Nicolette Roman de la Rose Dante	Gothic cathedrals Guild halls

32. THE THREAD OF LEARNING

NOT all the thinking of medieval men can be considered a part of the intellectual life of the Middle Ages. The great majority of people, then as now, were so preoccupied with their everyday economic and social life that they had neither the time, nor the energy, nor the necessary mental equipment to do useful thinking in other fields. They went about repeating ideas which they had inherited from Celtic or Germanic heathendom—just as today some people still insist that it is unlucky, or perhaps lucky, to plant potatoes in the dark of the moon. Such “folk wisdom” guided the daily lives of medieval men to a very considerable extent, but it need not be included in our survey of the intellectual life of the period. We shall discuss only the higher levels of medieval thought.

*Folk
wisdom*

The truly significant thinking of every age is done by the rather small minority of persons who make up the intellectual class. These men concern themselves profitably and fruitfully with weighty questions as to what the world is really like and what things are really worth while. They are the scientists, scholars, philosophers, artists, and literary men, or else they study and appreciate the works of such men. Until recent times the members of this intellectual class have been rather few in number, but they are the men who best express the spirit of their age, and they have influenced the course of human events out of all proportion to their numbers. They and their ideas therefore deserve our careful attention.

*The
intellectual
class*

In undertaking a study of the intellectual class in the Middle Ages—or of any other period in history—we must begin by considering the composition of this class. As the thinking of each age bears the marks of the social class to which its intellectual leaders belong, we must know who these leaders were and whence they sprang. Who were the

*Its
members*

people who wrote books, serious or otherwise, and more especially, what readers did they have in mind? Who employed artists and architects, thus setting standards of taste in the fine arts? Who produced and criticized ideas that were of more than momentary importance? In a word, in what class of society did the thinkers and their patrons originate?

**Intellectuals
in antiquity**

The intellectual class at Athens had rested upon a comparatively broad base, including citizens of the middle as well as of the upper classes, financially and socially; in Republican Rome it was made up largely of the senatorial class, who were rich landowners and statesmen; and under the Empire it was recruited principally in the bureaucracy, whose members were slowly falling into routine and apathy. Because of the composition of its intellectual class, the thinking of Periclean Athens was democratic, humanitarian, experimental, and receptive to new ideas; that of the Roman Republic was sober, conservative, and practical; and that of the Empire progressively became more and more jejune.

**Medieval
intellectual
leaders**

During the greater part of the Middle Ages, the intellectual class of western Europe was drawn almost entirely from the Christian clergy. Monks wrote serious books for other monks to read; bishops were the important patrons of the arts; and the clergy served as arbiters in the clash of rival ideas. Members of the feudal aristocracy often played a secondary role, especially as the patrons of poets and artists, but not until the thirteenth century did lawyers and other representatives of the commercial class begin to influence the broader thinking of their day. New thought patterns then began to appear, and a new secular culture arose that found its first brilliant expression at the court of Frederick II in Palermo. Until that time the intellectual life of the Middle Ages had been dominated by the clergy. The intellectual problems debated, and the works of art produced, were ones in which this clergy happened to be interested, and thought along other lines was actively discouraged.

THE CLASSICAL HERITAGE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

**The Dark
Ages**

The lamp of learning burned very low in the West during the Dark Ages from 500 to 1000, and at times it seemed that the intellectual creations of more than a thousand years would be lost to mankind. We owe it largely to the church that this catastrophe was averted.

While many ignorant Christians expressed a low opinion of pagan culture, sneering at literature, philosophy, and the fine arts because they supposedly possessed no power to save men's souls, there had always been enlightened persons in the church who appreciated the greatness and value of classical culture. Others realized that a certain amount of literary culture was necessary if men were to study the Bible, read the Church Fathers, confute pagans, or even understand Christianity itself. A few of the clergy therefore retained this indispensable minimum of learning.

Throughout the Dark Ages monasteries were almost the sole refuge remaining for educated or partially educated men. Here were to be found the intellectual class of the early Middle Ages. Here men of scholarly tastes read books, copied books, wrote a few books of their own, and taught youths to read them. Though such monks were to be found scattered through western Europe, it is interesting to note that in the sixth and seventh centuries some of the most important monasteries, so far as the preservation of learning is concerned, were at its farthest corner, namely, Ireland, which had never been a part of the Roman Empire and which had remained almost untouched by classical culture in ancient times.

Throughout the Middle Ages Latin remained the language of the church and of the intellectual class, and as Latin was now a foreign language to most men, grammars became necessary for those who wished to learn it. The grammarian Donatus, who wrote about 350, was the standard authority, with Priscian, who lived 150 years later, coming second in importance. Pious persons sometimes regretted the fact that these pagan grammarians chose their examples of good Latin from writers who praised the pagan gods, but in spite of repeated efforts no one produced a satisfactory substitute.

While a few scholarly monks may have studied the great Latin classics sympathetically, others found what they wanted more easily in the works of the pagan compilers and abbreviators who had flourished under the late Empire. Thus the beginner might receive his introduction to the liberal arts from a strange book entitled *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, written by Martianus Capella early in the fifth century. Here everything is put in story form. We are told how the god Mercury married Philology ("Love of Learning"), to whom Apollo gave a wedding gift consisting of seven handmaidens who symbolized the seven "liberal" arts: grammar, logic, rhetoric,

**Monasteries
as centers
of light**

**Latin the
learned
tongue**

**Late Latin
transmitters
of learning**

geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and music. The remainder of Capella's book, or more than three-quarters of the whole, is given over to long speeches in which each of the personified arts elaborates upon her contributions to human knowledge. Capella apparently gave his book this bizarre form as a pedagogical device, just as pedagogues sometimes use similar tricks today in order to sugar-coat the pill and make learning seem easy. To us the book seems intolerably childish and dull, but it was widely used in the Middle Ages as an introduction to learning.

Boethius

Boethius (480-524) was another of those who transmitted pagan culture to the Middle Ages. Being one of the few Greek scholars in the West, he translated into Latin two of Aristotle's five treatises on logic—thereby providing the West with all it knew of Aristotle until the twelfth century—as well as a commentary by the Neo-Platonic philosopher, Porphyry (see page 256). He also wrote books of his own on the liberal arts, especially arithmetic and geometry, and a famous work entitled *The Consolation of Philosophy*. In the latter he followed Capella's plan by personifying Philosophy and telling a story as background for her pious reflections. It is impossible to say whether or not Boethius was a Christian, but even if he conformed outwardly, he was at heart a Neo-Platonist. For many years he basked in the favor of Theodoric the Ostrogoth, but at last he fell under suspicion, he was imprisoned, and finally he was executed. It was while in prison awaiting death that he wrote the *Consolation*. Early in the Middle Ages this book was translated into English (Anglo-Saxon) by King Alfred the Great, and again by Chaucer at the end of that period.

Cassiodorus

Another of Theodoric's favorites was Cassiodorus (died about 568), who served him faithfully for many years as secretary. Several years after the king's death, Cassiodorus retired to a monastery, where he wrote numerous books, some on Gothic history and some on the liberal arts. His large and popular work on *Human and Divine Letters* contains, among other things, a full account of the seven liberal arts. Another "transmitter" was Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), who compiled an encyclopedia by copying out passages from Pliny and various writers of the late Empire. He was more interested in the mystical meanings of things than he was in facts, and he showed a positive genius for selecting bad authors to copy, but his work seemed valuable to medieval men because it mixed edification with learning—albeit with false learning.

Absorbing the Legacy

The men who prepared these compendiums of ancient learning were themselves Romans of the old stock, even though most of them had embraced Christianity. They made available to their contemporaries the heritage of antiquity, yet their barbarian successors were slow in absorbing the legacy. Only a few monks, scattered widely over the face of Europe, desired even so modest an amount of learning as these works provided. But as social conditions became more firmly established under the Merovingian kings, men began to appreciate the culture of ancient times and to make serious efforts of their own along similar lines. Thus Gregory of Tours (538-594) compiled a *History of the Franks*, from which we learn most of what we know about that time, but he complained in his atrocious Latin that almost no one was left to carry on the traditions of culture.

**Barbarian
ignorance**

It was in the British Isles that medieval men first made notable progress in absorbing the legacy of antiquity. The Anglo-Saxons had received their Christianity from two rival sources. Irish missionaries had invaded northwest England from the island of Iona, and somewhat later (in 597) a band of monks from Rome established themselves at Canterbury in the southeast. The Roman variety of Christianity—which differed appreciably from the Irish—eventually triumphed, but each did something to infect a few English Christians with a love of learning.

**Conversion
of England**

A century later the Venerable Bede (673-735) was the most brilliant intellectual light of England, and indeed of all western Europe. Born in northeastern England, perhaps the son and certainly the grandson of unbaptized pagans, Bede grew up in the monastery at Jarrow, and there he passed his whole life, except when absent on a few official missions. He tells us that his greatest delight was teaching others, and his writings show that he was a highly learned man. He wrote excellent Latin, though it was a second language to him. (Gregory of Tours, on the other hand, wrote the same Latin that he spoke—the only language he knew.) Bede also knew some Greek, and possibly he had a smattering of Hebrew. His writings cover many fields: commentaries on the Scriptures, grammar, works on chronology and the calendar, biographies, and discussions of scientific matters based largely upon Isidore of Seville. But Bede is best known for his *Ecclesiastical History of England*. The book is

Bede

justly praised as one of the finest histories written during the Middle Ages, and until quite recently it remained the source of almost all our knowledge of early Anglo-Saxon times.

British
mission-
aries to
Europe

Meantime British missionaries had been evangelizing the Continent and founding monasteries which quickly took the lead in spreading a knowledge of classical antiquity. Thus St. Columban (543-615) founded monasteries at St. Gall in Switzerland and Bobbio in northern Italy, both of which became famous for their libraries. Other Irish and English monks followed, among them St. Boniface (680-754), whose monastery at Fulda, in central Germany, became another great center of learning.

The Caro-
lingian
Renaissance

Such was the situation when Charlemagne began to rule in 768. Though himself unable to read or write, Charles spoke Latin fluently, and he was interested in education as a means of improving the church and its clergy. He therefore continued the work of these British monks. While in Italy in 781 he met an English scholar named Alcuin, whom he invited to establish a school at Aachen for training the higher clergy and the sons of great nobles. Alcuin (735-804), who had been trained by disciples of Bede, presently collected a remarkable group of educated men at this palace school. After Alcuin himself, the most famous was Einhard, a German whose delightful *Life of Charlemagne* bears witness to its author's deep

DECLINUM.

quae propria lingua uelatabi francica autē ^{Welatabi}
uultzi uocatur ea francis semp inimica cū
cinos suos qui francis uel subiecti uel foederati
erant odis infecturi belloq. premere ac ^{Wiltzi}

CAROLINGIAN WRITING. A new type of handwriting, known as "minuscule," appeared in Carolingian times. The Romans had used only letters resembling our capitals and it is from this minuscule that our "lower case" characters are derived. The specimen shown here is from a ninth-century manuscript of the *Annales* of Einhard. The first two lines read: "quae propria lingua uelatabi, francica autem uultzi uocatur. ea francis semper inimica, et uel"—"who were called Welatabi in their own language, but Wiltzi in Frankish. They were always hostile to the Franks, and by force. . . ." (Bettmann Archive)

study of the Latin classics, especially Suetonius. The leaders of this school inaugurated what is often called the "Carolingian Renaissance," a true "rebirth" of learning.

Trivium and
quodrivium

Charlemagne also ordered the establishment of two other varieties of schools. The first were monastery schools where novices were

trained to be monks, the second, cathedral schools conducted by bishops to train youths planning to enter the secular clergy. In each case, the curriculum was quite limited. First of all, the student had to learn Latin, the language of instruction in the schools. As soon as he had learned enough Latin to understand what was said, the young man undertook a study of the seven liberal arts, or at least of some of them. Ever since the days of Boethius and Cassiodorus, these arts had been divided into two groups, known respectively as the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, the threefold way and the fourfold. The *trivium* consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, by which the student principally improved his ability to handle Latin—though he learned by rote rather than by the extensive reading of Latin literature. The *quadrivium* included arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music. Arithmetic taught the student to do sums and multiply, which was not so easy as it might seem when done with Roman numerals (see page 317 n.). Geometry gave rules for measuring fields and the like, but only a few of Euclid's theorems were then known in the West; perhaps a little geography was included under geometry. Astronomy taught something of how the sun, moon, and stars supposedly revolved around the earth, enabled men to calculate the date of Easter, and guided their speculations as to the exact location of heaven and hell. When the young monk or priest had completed this course of study, he was adequately educated. He could read the Bible and the liturgical books (books giving prayers and directions for conducting services in churches or monasteries), and he was prepared to continue his studies, if he wished, by reading the Latin Fathers, especially the writings of Pope Gregory I, but also those of Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine.

THE TWELFTH-CENTURY RENAISSANCE

This thin intellectual diet was the best that the early Middle Ages had to offer. Charlemagne's monastic and cathedral schools had left much to be desired, both in equipment and in the quality and intellectual interests of teachers and pupils. Moreover, these schools declined sadly during the later ninth and early tenth centuries. New waves of barbarian invaders overwhelmed western Europe, but relative peace returned in the second half of the tenth century. Though the Emperor Otto I (936–973) resumed Charlemagne's program of encouragement to learning, little progress was made in his day. A

**New
intellectual
energy**

hundred years later, however, Europe began to show the new energy that produced a rising population, better farming, the revival of trade, the growth of cities, the crusades, and the papal monarchy. This new energy can also be observed in the intellectual life of western Europe, where it stimulated the "Renaissance of the Twelfth Century." This twelfth-century Renaissance was far more important than the feeble rebirth of learning in the eighth century that is called the Carolingian Renaissance, and though less widely heralded by historians, it was perhaps as significant as the more famous "Italian Renaissance" of the fifteenth century. A vigorous new life appeared in virtually every field of intellectual endeavor, and never again did Europe's intellectual leaders descend to the abysmal depths they had occupied during the Dark Ages.

**More
education
for laymen**

Even before the opening of the twelfth century, businessmen in the communes had begun to feel the need for more education than was available to laymen in those days. Every merchant could make good use of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and there was a constant demand for notaries who could draw up contracts and other legal documents in good Latin. At just this time, too, the kings began to use the services of educated laymen in their bureaucracies. In the earlier Middle Ages the kings had relied largely upon the higher clergy to man their offices, but frequent quarrels between church and state made them reluctant to employ so many servants of the church. An educated layman might therefore achieve a brilliant career at court, and before long education even came to enjoy a prestige value. Ambitious young laymen therefore wished to learn how to write good Latin, and they wanted to know many things not included in the old *trivium* and *quadrivium*. Moreover, when wealthy laymen began to boast of their literary education, the clergy too had to appear educated if they wished to retain the respect of their more influential parishioners. The revival of commerce thus raised educational standards for both clergy and laity and led directly to the twelfth-century Renaissance.

**Monastic
decline**

The Benedictine monks were not prepared to lead in this intellectual revival. In fact, the great monasteries that formerly had been important centers of education were now entering upon a period of decline. Famous abbeys, once the home of the intellectual leaders of Europe, lost their preëminence, and the founders of new orders, such as the Cistercians, were not inclined to emphasize the intellectual virtues. Moreover, the monasteries usually were located in remote and

secluded spots, far from the haunts of men, where the active life of the new world easily passed them by.

The cathedral schools were more fortunate. Being located in the cities, they were close to the great centers of the new life of the twelfth century. In these cities laymen and ecclesiastics were constantly coming and going, and new ideas were freely bandied about. Benedictines like Bede had been brilliant teachers, but as they taught only novices entering the monastery their pupils were never numerous, and the type of education they imparted did not change greatly from generation to generation. The cathedral schools, on the other hand, were concerned primarily with preparing young men to be parish priests. Presumably many of the pupils would return to their native villages, where life went on much as before, but others would be attached to the churches of the intellectually active and rapidly growing towns. The students who attended the cathedral schools usually were more alert intellectually than those who sought the retirement of monastic life, and they called for a new type of education. Often these schools received lay pupils who sought a general education, such as the clergy too required in the new days. Sometimes, too, communes organized public or private schools for this new type of student.

**Cathedral
schools**

The teachers in these schools usually were ordained priests, but primarily they were educated men who devoted their lives to educating others. The best of them held broad views of the world and man, and they thought deeply upon the problems of what to teach and how to teach it effectively. The curriculum of their schools was broadened, and their teaching methods were far better than those used in the monastic schools. The cathedral schools at Chartres and Orléans, Paris and Cologne, became the best educational institutions in Europe, with the most famous teachers, the largest and best libraries, and the ablest students of the day.

**New
curricula**

These cathedral schools paid greater attention to the classic Latin writers, notably Cicero, Vergil, and Ovid, than had been customary in monasteries during the Dark Ages. Perhaps their primary purpose was to teach men to write better Latin than had formerly been used, but occasionally the study of these writers inspired pupils with an appreciation and love of classic literature and introduced them to ideas not encouraged by the old curriculum. The greatest classical scholar of the century was an Englishman, John of Salisbury (c. 1115-1180), who had acquired his taste for the classics when a student

**John of
Salisbury**

at Chartres. He served as secretary to several successive archbishops of Canterbury in the days of Henry II, who sent him on diplomatic missions to Rome and elsewhere, and in his last years he returned to Chartres as bishop. He was no cloistered pedant but a man well acquainted with the important people of his day and a humanist interested in everything that is human. He apparently had studied almost every classic Latin writer whose works are available today, but he knew no Greek.

Roman Law

Law codes of the Dark Ages

The advance of commerce led to a revival of Roman law. The codification of this law in the *Corpus Juris Civilis* by the Emperor Justinian (see page 216) had been completed in 533, but the code was not widely used in the western provinces. The north continued to live under the Germanic law of the invaders while Italy, southern France, and Spain preserved the pre-Justinian law of Rome. Various codes drawn up by the barbarian kings for their Roman subjects—such as the *Lex Romana Visigothorum*—permitted these subjects to continue living under the older Roman law, which therefore never died out completely in the south. Even here, however, the old law was badly preserved in excerpts and summaries, and it presently degenerated into a customary law deeply tinged with Germanic and feudal ideas.

Irnerius's lectures on Roman law

The merchants of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were much dissatisfied with this state of affairs. The feudal law under which they lived did not adequately cover questions arising almost daily in commercial life, and it varied from country to country, perhaps even from city to city. Knowledge of the old Roman law was best preserved in Italy, in whose communes merchants were constantly invoking its provisions. Early in the twelfth century a certain Irnerius (c. 1060–1125) lectured at Bologna on the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, but he certainly was not the first to do so. Students flocked to his classroom, where he read and explained Justinian's texts. He and his successors filled the margins of their copies of the code with notes or explanations, called "glosses," which were later published separately. These "glossators" of the twelfth century resurrected the study of Roman civil law.

Roman law adopted in Europe

The revival of Roman law was of great interest to others beside the merchants. Frederick Barbarossa made Justinian's absolutism a precedent for his own aspirations in that direction, and he used it to

justify his attacks upon the communes and the papacy. At the same time, Arnold of Brescia justified his revolution in Rome by insisting that the Roman emperors, including Constantine and Justinian, had ruled by the authority of the Roman people—not by that of God. Students and traders soon carried knowledge of the *Corpus Juris* beyond the Alps, and in the thirteenth century it became firmly established in southern France—which was known as the “land of written law,” as opposed to northern France where Germanic “customary law” prevailed. As early as the days of Henry II Roman law reached England but it was not well received and it never took deep root there. Nevertheless, its broad principles sometimes influenced the lawyers who helped Edward I in his great legislative activity at the end of the next century. Even the church authorities were impressed. Canon law (codified by Gratian of Bologna about 1140; see page 509) absorbed the principles of Roman civil law, and the great popes of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries all had been trained in civil as well as canon law.

The revival of Roman law was an event of importance for the intellectual class of western Europe as well as for the merchants and kings. Roman law presented a beautifully articulated system of ideas, purely secular, humane and objective, far more impressive intellectually than the writings of Martianus Capella and the other “transmitters,” and as authoritative in its field as were the Church Fathers in theirs. For the first time in several centuries medieval men had something really new to think about. The lawyers who studied this law became a separate caste in society, thus rivaling the clergy, and they clearly were members of the intellectual class. The monopoly of the clergy upon intellectual leadership had been broken.

**Lawyers
and the
Intellectual
class**

Translations from the Arabic and Greek

Roman lawyers were not alone in bringing new ideas to Europe in the twelfth century. As we have already seen (page 318), Islamic science was far superior to that of the Christians in the early Middle Ages, and a few Christians were dimly aware of its superiority. Thus Gerbert of Aurillac, whom the Emperor Otto III made Pope Sylvester II (999–1003) and who was unquestionably the most learned man of his day in the West, had visited Spain in his youth and had there discovered something of Arabic mathematics. He is credited with reintroducing the abacus into the West (though used by the Romans,

**Gerbert of
Aurillac**

it had been forgotten in the early Middle Ages), and though apparently he knew no Arabic, he learned a little about Islamic astronomy. These accomplishments were enough, however, to give him the dangerous reputation of being a magician who had sold his soul to the devil, and few of Europe's intellectual leaders cared to follow in his steps.

**Moslems
and
Christians
in Toledo**

The crusaders learned much from the Moslems, but they ordinarily were not men of an intellectual type, and Palestine was a poor place in which to study the best Arabic science and philosophy. Sicily was the scene of closer intellectual contacts between Christians and Moslems, especially in the days of the Norman kings and under the Emperor Frederick II, but it was primarily in Spain that Christians acquired the learning of the Moslems. The reconquest of Toledo (1085) attracted the attention of western Christendom to that city, and early in the twelfth century European scholars began flocking thither in quest of Arabic books. These men were especially interested in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, but they presently discovered the Arabic translations of Aristotle and the commentaries of Moslem philosophers. Translators then put many of these books into Latin, usually with the aid of Jewish scholars.

**Translations
from the
Arabic**

One of the first of these translators was an Englishman, Adelard of Bath, who as a young man had studied in the cathedral school at Tours and taught at Laon, in northern France. Beginning about 1109 he traveled for seven years in Sicily, Asia Minor, and Syria, and later in Spain. He translated Euclid's *Geometry*, several others works on mathematics (including one on trigonometry), and books on astronomy and philosophy. Apparently Adelard was a layman, and his writings showed that he preferred free inquiry and rational criticism to the customary blind acceptance of authority. A more prolific translator was the Italian Gerard of Cremona, who is credited with translating almost a hundred books before his death at Toledo in 1187. Before the end of the century European scholars had available to them Euclid, Ptolemy (the Greek astronomer and geographer), the mathematics and astronomy (and astrology) of the Arabs, the medicine of Galen, Hippocrates, and Avicenna, and the whole text of Aristotle. Moreover our "Arabic numerals," introduced at this time, greatly simplified the processes of arithmetic.

**Aristotle
in Latin**

The twelfth century also witnessed the beginning of translation from the Greek. The earliest texts to be translated were theological treatises, but presently Sicily produced Latin versions of a few of

Plato's dialogues and of the three Aristotelian treatises on logic that Boethius had missed. These were followed, shortly after 1200, by translations of Aristotle's scientific works, and later in the thirteenth century came the *Politics*, the *Ethics*, and the *Rhetoric*. By this time the whole of Aristotle had been translated from the Arabic as well, which gave the West two parallel versions of that philosopher's works. Neither of these versions was very accurate, yet like the *Corpus Juris Civilis* and the works of Arabic mathematicians and philosophers, they gave a stimulus to European thinking along scientific, philosophical, and theological lines that ushered in a new age. But even this was not the whole contribution of the fertile twelfth century to the intellectual history of western Europe: we have still to consider the rise of universities.

33. MEDIEVAL LEARNING

The study of medicine and law

THE social and intellectual changes that swept over western Europe in the twelfth century brought with them a great expansion of the learned professions. During the Dark Ages, Europe's reputable physicians were mostly Spanish Jews who had studied under Arabian masters and who served only princes, bishops, and other rich patrons. Ordinary people depended upon priests and monks for medical aid, and monkish medicine consisted largely of incantations supplemented by a few old wives' nostrums handed down from antiquity. When knowledge of Arabian medicine began to seep into Europe, rich burghers demanded the services of men professionally skilled in this new knowledge. A caste of physicians was thus called into being. At the same time, a caste of professional lawyers was appearing in the communes. Years of study were necessary before a man was qualified to practice medicine or law, and the old monastic and cathedral schools were not prepared to offer instruction in these new fields. The resulting need for schools of a new sort led to the rise of universities.

The first universities

Europe's first medical school was at Salerno, south of Naples in Italy, not far from the Moslem centers of Sicily. Here medicine was taught as early as the eleventh century by a certain Constantine the African (d. 1087), who translated several books from the Arabic. In later times Jewish or Moslem physicians did much of the teaching there. In the twelfth century another medical school was established at Montpellier, in southern France. As this city then belonged to the king of Aragon, it profited from close contacts with Jews and Moslems in Spain. Meantime Bologna had become famous as a center for the study of Roman law, sought by students from all parts of Europe, and during the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries

similar schools were founded elsewhere. Professors from Bologna began to lecture at Padua in 1222; two years later the Emperor Frederick II founded a university at Naples, summoning his professors from Bologna; and before 1230 similar universities were established at Toulouse in southern France and at Salamanca in Spain.

The University of Paris had a rather different history. In the twelfth century there were three important schools in the city, one of which was attached to the cathedral of Notre Dame, one to the abbey of St. Victor, and one to that of Ste. Geneviève. Late in the century other professors began lecturing in the city on law and medicine. The cathedral school, like the cathedral itself, was located on an island in the Seine, but the other teachers held forth on the southern or left bank of the river, where students presently became so numerous that they filled all that part of the city. From that day to this, the *rive gauche*, or "left bank," of the Seine has been the student section of Paris, the seat of her world-famous schools. It is still called the "Latin Quarter" because of the language spoken by professors and students in those days.

As England did not then offer educational opportunities equal to those on the Continent, many Englishmen (such as Adelard of Bath and John of Salisbury) went to study in France, where some of them achieved high distinction. Late in the twelfth century a body of these scholars returned to England and began lecturing at Oxford. Several years later, in 1209, some of the Oxford scholars seceded and settled at Cambridge. Heretofore universities had invariably been located in important cities, but the sites of the two English universities had not been important, either educationally or ecclesiastically, and no one knows why Oxford and Cambridge were selected as university towns. No other universities appeared in England until the nineteenth century. The German universities were late in starting. The university at Prague (now in Czechoslovakia) was founded in 1347 while Heidelberg, the earliest in what is now Germany, dates only from 1385. Just as Bologna served as model for the universities of southern Europe, those of the north followed Paris.

Teachers, pupils, and lectures were not enough to make a university. There had to be a formal organization as well, and usually the university received a formal charter from some high authority in church or state—though this charter might not be given until long after the schools had won fame as centers of learning. Sometimes the students formed the first recognized associations, sometimes the pro-

Paris

**Oxford and
Cambridge**

**Form of
a university**

fessors. The Latin word for a corporation was *universitas*—literally, all those sharing membership in the association—and such an association of students or professors was called a *universitas scholarium* or a *universitas magistrorum*. It is from these phrases that our word “university” is derived.



When the presence of large numbers of foreign students in a town tempted citizens to charge exorbitant prices for food and lodging, the students in self-defense organized themselves into corporations or, as they usually said, into "nations." At Bologna there were two such nations, the *Cismontani*, or Italians, and the *Transmontani*, or foreigners; other universities sometimes had four or more nations. These student organizations hired the professors, required them to lecture regularly, and specified what each should teach. In those days students were earnest young men who insisted upon getting what they paid for.

**Organiza-
tions of
students**

At Paris, on the other hand, professors organized four corporations, called faculties, based on the subjects they taught: arts, law, medicine, and theology. The most important duty of these corporations was to decide who should have the right to teach. At first the bishop, or one of his agents, had conferred this right, but during the twelfth century it came to be granted by the corporation after its members had given the candidate a searching examination. Those who passed the examinations, and were admitted to the corporation, received degrees which varied with the different faculties: a man might become a "master of arts" (*Magister artium*, M.A.), or a "doctor" in the other faculties (*Legum doctor*, LL.D.; *Medicinae doctor*, M.D.; *Sanctae theologiae doctor*, S.T.D.). In those days the bachelor's degree was of little importance, merely entitling its holder to assist a professor by giving occasional lectures.

**Organizo-
tions of
professors**

At first these academic degrees gave their possessors the right to teach only at the place where they were granted, but in the next century popes (or occasionally kings) began to recognize certain universities as so excellent that their graduates might teach anywhere. A school thus signally honored was known as a *studium generale*, a place of study for scholars from all parts of Christendom. A papal bull of Gregory IX granted this honor to the University of Toulouse in 1229, and other bulls followed during the century, until the oldest and most famous of all universities, Bologna and Paris, deemed it worth while to request such papal recognition in 1292. Oxford and Padua never bothered to apply, but their graduates enjoyed the same privileges. These *studia generalia* were the great universities of the Middle Ages.

**Studia
generalia**

At Paris and most other universities, by far the largest part of the students studied under the faculty of arts, seeking what we today call a "general education." They studied the old seven liberal arts,

Curricula

supplemented to some extent, perhaps, by the new knowledge derived from the Arabs. The other faculties of the university resembled our graduate schools, for only students with an arts degree were admitted. The professors of law lectured on the *Corpus Juris Civilis*, and used Gratian's *Decretum* for canon law. The professors of medicine expounded Hippocrates, Galen, and the works of various Moslem physicians, notably Avicenna, but there was little laboratory or clinical work. The professors of theology taught the textbook of Peter Lombard (to whom we shall return shortly) and in the thirteenth century they wrote compendious treatises, called *Summae*, which covered the whole field and have served as standard guides to Catholic theology ever since. A good student might expect to receive his master of arts degree when about twenty years old, after which he would spend several more years in study if he wished a degree in law or medicine, and even longer if he wished to become a doctor of theology.

**The four
"faculties"**

Not all universities boasted all four faculties. Salerno apparently taught nothing but medicine; Bologna taught both civil and canon law, and later added medicine, but while instruction was offered in the liberal arts, this field was rather neglected. Padua and most of the other southern universities taught law and medicine, giving only minor attention to the arts. At Paris there were four faculties, with theology recognized as the queen of all. In 1219, however, the pope forbade the teaching of civil law there. The blow was not serious, for northern France was in the "land of customary law," where Roman law did not prevail. Roman law was taught at Orléans, Montpellier, and elsewhere, but only canon law at Paris. The English universities taught the arts and theology but left legal training to the Inns of Court at London.

Colleges

The problem of finding lodging for students was always a serious one. Some students rented rooms, others might find places in monasteries, but the majority occupied miserable quarters. Philanthropic men therefore built dormitories in which a few students could live at modest cost or perhaps at no charge at all. One such foundation was due to Robert de Sorbon, confessor to Louis IX, who in 1257 persuaded the king to erect a dormitory for sixteen students of theology. This was expanded from time to time until it became a center for the whole theological faculty.¹ Several other endowed dormitories, called

¹ It thus came about that in the late Middle Ages and down through the eighteenth century the faculty of theology at Paris was ordinarily spoken of as "the

"colleges," were presently added until a hundred years later they numbered about forty at Paris. Similar "colleges" appeared at Oxford and Cambridge in the thirteenth century. As the university had no buildings of its own, it became customary to give instruction in these buildings. Every college came to have its own staff of teachers, to each of whom certain students were assigned for all their instruction, and the "university" became a rather abstract thing, hiring a few professors to lecture publicly, giving examinations, and granting degrees. This system was long ago superseded except at Oxford and Cambridge.

Academic Freedom

The sojourn of a large number of youthful students in a town or city created other problems that were not easily solved. Many of the young fellows were full of high spirits and spent much of their time drinking, quarreling, and fighting. Friends fought with each other, nation fought against nation, and the most fun of all came from the "town and gown" riots in which students (wearing academic caps and gowns) fought with townsmen—often with swords. Naturally the town authorities sided with their fellow citizens, and the university authorities tried to defend the students. After a serious riot in 1229, during which the Paris police killed a number of students, it was agreed that thereafter students should be subject only to the university authorities. The official justification of this measure lay in the claim that the schools were religious establishments and that, theoretically at least, the students were young men preparing to enter the clergy: they should therefore enjoy "benefit of clergy," which implied the right to be tried in church courts. This arrangement was soon adopted by other universities, and even in the nineteenth century some German universities still maintained their own jails for students.

A more important freedom was freedom for the professors to teach what they believed true and for the university to appoint whomever it chose to professorships. Here too Paris took the lead. When the bishop of Paris tried to impress his views upon the university, the

*Quarrels
of "town
and gown"*

*The fight
for
academic
freedom*

Sorbonne." This faculty, long since fallen into decay, was abolished in 1792. The sumptuous building in Paris now called the Sorbonne, built in 1884-1889 on the site of the old Sorbonne, is now used by the university for classes in the liberal arts and sciences, the library, and sections of what we would call the graduate school. By giving its name to this branch of the University of Paris, it has again spread the fame of Robert de Sorbon throughout the learned world.

professors appealed to the pope, who gladly intervened and silenced the bishop. Before long, however, he was trying to dictate to the university himself, as when he forbade the study of Roman law. (Students of this law were likely to become secular and anti-clerical.) Somewhat later he tried to prohibit teaching the philosophy of Aristotle. He also tried to fill professorships, especially those in theology, with Dominican and Franciscan friars, who were under his direct control. Toward the middle of the thirteenth century the question became acute when the university limited the number of friars who could hold professorships. The Italian universities had similar conflicts with the papacy at times, even though they did not teach theology, but in England the universities were less frequently troubled, partly perhaps because Oxford then was under the bishop of Lincoln, who lived a hundred miles away. The controversy thus begun is still with us. On countless other occasions politicians and ecclesiastics have attempted to limit academic freedom, but only in the more backward countries have they succeeded for long—or rather, those countries where they succeeded soon became backward.

Thirteenth-
century
Paris

The thirteenth century was the great century for medieval universities, and at this time Paris clearly led them all. It has been estimated that as many as four thousand students were then regularly in attendance, coming from all the countries of western Europe. The most brilliant scholars of Europe taught there, and many of the most prominent persons in church and state had passed their student days at this famous university. In fact, it was a common boast in Paris that while Germany might have the *imperium* (rule) and Italy the *sacerdotium* (priesthood) France surpassed them all with the *studium* (learning).

MEDIEVAL SCHOLARSHIP

Feudal
thought
patterns

Medieval ways of thought differed widely from ours. Under the feudal system all political authority descended from the king through the great nobles and their vassals to the lord of the manor. The king was in no sense a representative of the people, employed by them to perform various useful services, nor did he deign to derive his authority from them: he derived it from God. Likewise in the church, authority descended from the pope through the archbishops and bishops to the parish priest. In theory at least, the local priest was not a man hired by his parishioners to preside at public worship, to

organize church affairs, and perhaps to help men make up their minds on theological and other questions: he was an official sent by higher authorities to tell them what was what, and they were supposed to accept unquestioningly whatever he told them, because it really came from God himself. Everything was highly authoritarian, the exact opposite of what is expected in a modern democracy.

Similar conditions prevailed in the world of thought. It rarely occurred to anyone in the early Middle Ages to seek new knowledge by investigating nature. Men merely tried to learn what the authorities had said—and these authorities were the Church Fathers and the compilers who had lived under the late Roman Empire. Even the twelfth-century translations of Aristotle, Euclid, and Galen did not ordinarily alter their fundamental attitudes and thought patterns: men merely substituted these new authorities for the old ones. Likewise, it was universally believed that the truths of religion had been revealed by God, not discovered by men, and that this revelation had been made, once and for all, in remote times and places. All that medieval scholars hoped to do was to preserve intact the legacy they had inherited from earlier times. But when we compare the knowledge and learning they thus inherited from classical antiquity with that which their barbarian ancestors had possessed, we are not surprised that the splendor of their Christian inheritance rather overwhelmed them, preventing criticism.

This medieval approach to knowledge encouraged certain types of thinking at the expense of others. When a modern scientist attacks a problem, he gathers as much specific information as he can by observation and experiment, after which he attempts to formulate a general hypothesis to explain the facts he has gathered. This hypothesis, however, is always provisional and subject to revision in the light of further discoveries. The reasoning by which he thus advances from specific facts to a general hypothesis is called "inductive logic." The medieval man, on the other hand, first sought for general principles, which he accepted on authority, and then applied them as best he could to the question at issue, using what is known as "deductive logic." (An extreme example: "All men are mortal; Socrates is a man; therefore, Socrates is mortal." The reasoning undoubtedly is correct, but how did the medieval logician make sure that all men really are mortal? By invoking the authority of some ancient author, not by studying mortality statistics.) The man using deductive logic assumes that knowledge trickles down from the general to

*Dependence
upon
authorities*

*The "trickle
down"
theory of
knowledge*

the particular; inductive logic builds up from the particular to the general. Medieval men believed that scientific knowledge, like political authority or religious truth, trickled down from on high, whereas in modern democracies men believe that general truths, like political authority, are built up from individual observations. In studying the thought of medieval scholars and scientists we must constantly bear in mind their unhesitating acceptance of this "trickle down" theory as to the origin of all knowledge.

Scholasticism

What the
scholastics
thought
about

Throughout the Middle Ages theology was hailed as the "queen of the sciences," and it received the careful attention of the most brilliant scholars and thinkers of the time, but men were interested in many other intellectual matters as well. There was endless discussion and dispute, on all sorts of things, which led to the rise of those differing schools of thought which, taken together, make up what we call "scholasticism." The men who formulated it are called "scholastics" or "schoolmen." We need not elaborate upon their theological tenets, but a few names may be mentioned, and the general course of scholastic development may be sketched, for it shows an interesting and important aspect of the intellectual history of the Middle Ages.

St. Anselm

Until the thirteenth century, most scholastic theologians were Neo-Platonists who got their Platonism largely from St. Augustine. Such a man was St. Anselm (1033-1109). Born at Aosta, high among the Alps in the extreme northwestern corner of Italy, Anselm was for many years a monk and later abbot at Bee in Normandy. In 1093 he became archbishop of Canterbury, after which his life was wasted in quarrels with William II and Henry I over investitures. Most of his theological writing was done at Bec. His works included two tracts (*Proslogium* and *Monologium*), in which he attempted, rather unsuccessfully, to prove the existence of God by logic alone; and a treatise setting forth reasons why God became incarnate in Christ (*Cur Deus Homo?*). He is best remembered, however, for a phrase in the *Proslogium* which succinctly expresses the fundamental attitude of all the schoolmen. "I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but *I believe in order to understand*. For I also believe that, unless I believed, I should not understand." This dark saying, *credo ut intelligam*, has been much discussed and often ridiculed, and it certainly is not easy to see exactly what it meant. Was this an intel-

lectual abdication, or did Anselm merely mean to say that, in order to understand Christianity correctly, we must study it sympathetically, as loyal members of the Christian community? At any rate, he and his scholastic successors always made it clear that they accepted Christianity first and tried afterward to make Christian doctrine comprehensible and acceptable to the intelligence.

The next of the great scholastics was Peter Abelard (1079–1142). Reaching Paris from his home in Brittany about 1100, Abelard presently became the most popular professor there and attracted crowds of students to his lectures at Ste. Geneviève. He was a brilliant logician and a most stimulating teacher, but conceited, quarrelsome, and possessed of a genius for making enemies—the most formidable of whom was the great St. Bernard. About 1115 Abelard transferred to the cathedral school of Notre Dame, where he met, fell in love with, and seduced Heloise, the niece of a cathedral canon. The story of their famous love affair is preserved in Abelard's autobiographical *History of My Calamities* and in their letters to each other. Thereafter Abelard's enemies pursued him implacably, until they had hounded him into the grave. Heloise entered a convent, Abelard a monastery, and though he left it more than once to resume his lectures, he was quickly silenced every time. The two lovers were not reunited until death. Their remains now lie side by side in a Parisian cemetery, where they are still visited by romantic pilgrims, and their sad story has been retold by countless authors.

**Peter
Abelard**

His reading in the Church Fathers showed Abelard that these authorities often contradicted each other and sometimes even contradicted themselves. Like all schoolmen, he believed firmly in the truth of Christian dogma, and he used his logic to reconcile discrepant authorities. In his most important theological book he discussed 158 of these difficulties. First he stated the question briefly and simply: "Should human faith be based on reason, or no?" "Is God the author of evil, or no?" "Was Adam saved, or no?" He then cited authorities on each side, but he left the reader to decide for himself which was right. Because of the form he gave his questions, the book was entitled *Sic et Non* ("Yes and No"). Abelard's courageous rationalism shocked many people, but even St. Bernard did not succeed in pinning heresy charges on him until the last year of his life.

Sic et Non

Peter Lombard (1100–1160) had been a pupil of Abelard and continued his master's teaching at Paris, though in a less controversial spirit. He compiled a large book called *Sententiae* ("Opin-

**Peter
Lombard**

ious"), somewhat after the pattern of *Sic et Non* but covering the whole field of theology, and clearly indicating and proving the orthodox answer to each question. For many years this book remained the standard text used by professors of theology.

**Critics of
scholas-
ticism**

Nevertheless, there were people who were not satisfied with this method of settling questions. John of Salisbury had been a student at Paris when Abelard was in his prime, and several years later he revisited Ste. Geneviève when passing through the city. He noted that the schoolmen were still just where he had left them, discussing the same questions in the same way and having made no observable progress toward understanding the faith. "Experience thus taught me," he remarked, "that while dialectic furthers other studies, it remains bloodless and barren by itself, and that it does not quicken the soul to bear the fruit of philosophy unless it be inseminated from some other source." Before long, however, this other source appeared, for the introduction of Aristotle's writings at last gave the schoolmen something new and solid upon which to exercise their logic.

**Dismay
caused by
Aristotle**

At first the translations of Aristotle brought dismay to the church authorities, and more than one pope strictly forbade the study of these pagan writings. When scholars continued to study them anyhow, the church was forced to defend its theology by other methods. Being quite confident of the loyalty of the Dominicans to orthodoxy, the popes made great efforts to fill the theological faculties with Dominican professors. We have already seen that this policy led to a bitter quarrel with the universities.

**Church
acceptance
of Aristotle**

As a matter of fact, there were several attitudes which Christian scholars could, and did, take toward Aristotle and the Arabic commentaries. Some men remained faithful to Augustine and Plato, but in addition to rejecting Aristotle, they also rejected reason itself, insisting that God and religion could be known only through personal mystical experience. Such a man was St. Bonaventura (1221-1274), the leading Franciscan of his day. Other scholars distinguished sharply between revealed religion and Aristotelian philosophy or science and maintained that, as truth is always truth, there can be no conflict between them: they then forgot about theology and took the first steps toward becoming natural scientists. A third group, led by the Dominicans, accepted Aristotle discriminatingly. They found much that was helpful in his scientific and philosophical writings, but they unhesitatingly rejected whatever seemed to contradict orthodox Christian dogma. They also discovered that the philo-

sophical arguments with which Arabic philosophers had supported Islam, and with which Maimonides had defended Judaism, could be used just as well to buttress Catholic Christianity. They therefore accepted Aristotle and the commentaries, Christianizing them, as it were, and citing them whenever it suited their convenience. The two most distinguished members of this Dominican school were Albertus Magnus (c. 1206–1280; see page 575) and his pupil St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274).

Thomas Aquinas was born to a noble family, boasting German and Norman-Sicilian ancestors, at their castle near Monte Cassino in central Italy. Entering the Dominican order at the age of seventeen, he studied under Albertus Magnus at Cologne and later at Paris, where he took a doctorate in theology in 1257. The rest of his life he spent either teaching at Paris and in Italy or writing his voluminous works. Two of these books are still regarded as of supreme importance. In the *Summa Catholicae Fidei contra Gentiles* ("Summary of the Catholic Faith against the Gentiles"), Aquinas defended the Catholic faith on strictly rational grounds, maintaining that all the truths of Christian orthodoxy can be proved by reason alone, and that revelation merely makes them easier and simpler. In the enormous *Summa Theologiae* he intended to cover the whole field of theology systematically, but he had not yet finished the book at the time of his death. Here he discussed the nature and attributes of God, the nature and purpose of man, ethics, Christ and his place in the divine economy, the seven sacraments, and countless other matters. His books are closely reasoned and therefore hard to read, but they have been accepted by the church as authoritative statements of Catholic doctrine.

**St. Thomas
Aquinas**

Not everyone shared the views of St. Thomas, even in his own day. The Franciscans were especially hostile, partly because of their preference for mystical religious experience, and partly for more worldly reasons. It has even been remarked that the course of theological development during the next two centuries was determined largely by the squabbles between Franciscans and Dominicans. The Franciscans at Oxford took a rather different line from that of St. Bonaventura. Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175–1253) and his famous pupil Roger Bacon (c. 1214–1294) criticized Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans generally for their excessive reliance upon formal logic and their undue neglect of scientific observation and experiment. Perhaps Bacon was a quarrelsome eccentric rather than a deep

**Franciscan
criticism
of Thomism**

thinker, but there can be no doubt that many of his proposals have proved fruitful and that, in general, modern science has followed the lines he suggested. In the next century other Franciscans—Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians—continued their opposition to St. Thomas's methods and took the first steps toward becoming the founders of modern science.

Historical Writing

Monastic chronicles

Only in the nineteenth century did the formal writing of history become a matter of academic interest. Yet though history was given no attention in the medieval universities, histories were then being written in many monasteries. These histories usually took the form of chronicles in which the author recorded events as they took place, year by year. In early times monkish chroniclers, holding rather narrow views of the world, often limited their narratives to events happening in the vicinity of their monasteries, but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they produced works of wider scope. Perhaps the best of these chroniclers was Matthew Paris (d. 1259), an English monk at St. Albans near London. Long before his day, the monks of St. Albans had begun a chronicle which Matthew kept up to date during the years from 1235 to 1259. He was a man of wide acquaintance whose correspondents kept him informed as to what was happening throughout western Europe. His chronicle therefore had a broadly cosmopolitan character. One modern critic has praised him as "the thirteenth-century editor of *The Times*." That is just what Matthew and his colleagues really were—superior journalists who recorded well the happenings of their own day but who had only a slight interest in their past. Though their works are of value to modern students of medieval history, these chroniclers cannot justly be called historians.

World histories

The intellectually stimulating atmosphere of the twelfth century sometimes inspired chroniclers to take broader views of their past and to devote more attention to their historical background. Sometimes their chronicles took the form of world histories, beginning with Adam or Abraham or the birth of Christ. As their early pages were compiled from Jerome and Cassiodorus, Justin and Orosius, and more directly from other chronicles, they merely set forth in outline the story which has sometimes been called "the Christian epic." These chroniclers made no extensive researches, and they did not embellish their narratives with fresh facts or new interpretations.

Questions sometimes arose, however, to which the authorities gave no answer. Who were the early Britons, and where did they come from? What were the Franks doing at the time of the Trojan War? Imaginative persons devised answers to such questions, largely on the basis of a childish philology (the Britons were said to be descended from an early Roman, Brutus!), but the better chroniclers paid little attention to such fancies, partly (let us hope) from scholarly skepticism but more probably from lack of interest. What kind of man would presume to know more than such ancient authorities as St. Jerome?

The best of these world historians was Otto of Freising (c. 1113–1158). A grandson of the Emperor Henry IV and an uncle of Barbarossa, he was educated at Paris, where he heard Abelard lecture, and he then entered the Cistercian order (1133). Thanks to his family connections he was much at court, where he enjoyed the confidence of Barbarossa; he was made bishop of Freising (in Bavaria); and he accompanied the Second Crusade, reaching Jerusalem for Easter, 1148. Otto's fame rests on two books, *The History of the Two Cities* and the uncompleted *Deeds of the Emperor Frederick I*. As its title suggests, the *History* was deeply influenced by ideas stemming from St. Augustine's *City of God*. The book is a world history covering the period from Creation to 1146, based on a wide reading of the ancient authors and showing a true sense of historical perspective by the fact that barely one-half of the seventh book is devoted to events of the author's own day. Most curious of all is the eighth and concluding book, which deals at length with the Last Judgment that is to come at the final consummation of all history. Today historians usually neglect this aspect of things.

Otto of
Freising

The crusades produced a number of histories of a new sort, showing other phases of the new life of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A few of the historians, all of them Frenchmen, may be mentioned by name. Guibert de Nogent (1053–1124) belonged to the nobility of northern France, received an excellent education under Anselm at Bec, read widely in the Latin classics, became a monk and eventually abbot at Nogent, and was the author of three remarkable books. He wrote a history of the First Crusade under the striking title *Gesta Dei per Francos* ("The Works of God through the French"). As he had not been a crusader, he was forced to rely upon others for his facts, thus becoming a "researcher" after a fashion, and in general he chose good authorities. He had a keen eye for

Guibert
de Nogent

the less idealistic aspects of the crusade—the mass hysteria that caused men to take the cross, the avarice and perfidy of leaders—yet he admired its nobler side. Secondly, he wrote a book entitled *De Pignoribus Sanctorum* ("On the Relics of the Saints") in which he became ironical over popular superstitions regarding these relics and suggested methods of determining their authenticity, thus foreshadowing the rise of scientific historical criticism. And thirdly, he wrote a delightful autobiography. Few books of this sort were written during the Middle Ages, which gives Guibert's work especial interest as illustrating the individualism which is often said to be a characteristic of modern times.

Other
historians
of the
crusades

William of Tyre (c. 1130–c. 1190) is often recognized as the greatest of the medieval historians of the crusades. Though born in the Orient and passing most of his life there, William was a member of the French aristocracy and educated in the West. For nine years (1174–1183) he served the Latin king of Jerusalem as chancellor (see page 338). His *Historia Hierosolymitana* ("Jerusalem History"), which covers the crusading movement from its inception in 1095 down to 1184, is especially valuable for the geographical information it presents and because of its author's keen insight into the character of his heroes. The book is based on his personal knowledge as well as on a wide reading of other works in Latin, Greek, and Arabic. A second historian of this school is Geoffroi de Villehardouin (c. 1160–1213), who assisted at the capture of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade. His history of that enterprise, entitled *La Conquête de Constantinople*, is one of the first long pieces of prose in Old French, and his skill as a storyteller has kept it popular to the present day. The third and last of these writers is Jean, Sieur de Joinville (1224–1319), the lifelong follower and biographer of Louis IX. He dictated his *Histoire de Saint Louis* in his old age, more than thirty years after the king's death. Joinville was not so saintly as his royal patron, nor did he pretend to be, yet his vivid picture of the king and his times entitles him to a place among the master historians of the Middle Ages.

Science and Magic

No
scientific
research

Except in the faculty of medicine, the universities of the thirteenth century cared no more for scientific research than they did for historical research. Yet this was the century when Western Christendom

was gradually absorbing the scientific knowledge brought by the translations from Greek and Arabic, when Aristotle was superseding Isidore of Seville as the ultimate authority on scientific matters. European scholars were acquiring a new knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, the physical and biological sciences, and medicine, but for many years to come they added little to what the Arabs taught them.

Two of the most popular subjects to reach western Europe from the East were astrology and alchemy, which we today would classify as superstition or magic, but which then exercised a powerful though baneful influence upon the scientific thinking of the West. Astrologers endeavored to foretell the future, and even the fate of individual men, from the positions of planets and stars at some critical moment. Theirs was an ancient science which arose in the Orient several centuries before Christ and received its definitive form from the Greeks at about the beginning of the Christian Era. It had not died out in the West during the Dark Ages, but during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries it was given a new life. Several books on astrology were translated from the Arabic, while kings and rich men consulted astrologers regularly, and for the next two or three centuries astrologers strongly influenced these educated and highly placed persons. In fact, millions of people in America today still believe in astrology, at least ten cents' worth, while a few allow themselves to be bilked out of much handsomer sums.

Astrology

Alchemy was another ancient superstition that spread rapidly under Arabic influence. The alchemists spent their time trying to find a mythical "philosopher's stone" which would enable them to transmute the baser metals into gold and to perform various other wonderful feats. In their quest for this stone, Moslem alchemists had sometimes learned something of value about chemistry, but Christian alchemists merely repeated what Arabic authorities had said, and did little or no experimenting of their own.

Alchemy

Even professors of medicine usually found it easier to expound texts translated from the Greek or Arabic rather than to observe and experiment, but a few medieval physicians professed a theoretical admiration for experimentation. Albertus Magnus (c. 1206-1280), the Dominican whom we have met as the teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas (page 571), is sometimes honored as the most learned natural scientist of his day, and in his voluminous commentaries upon Aristotle he shows the breadth of his scientific knowl-

**Thirteenth-century
scientists**

edge. On many occasions Albert rejected the statements of authorities on the ground that they were contrary to experience, but it did not occur to him to suggest a systematic check of all Aristotle's statements. Likewise, Roger Bacon talked much about experimentation, foreseeing great advances in scientific knowledge from this method and prophesying wonderful inventions based on the new knowledge thus acquired, but apparently the only experiments he actually performed himself were a few in optics. Perhaps the most indefatigable, or at least the most eminent, experimenter in the thirteenth century was the Emperor Frederick II. His experiments were rather hit and miss, however, and it seems not improbable that some of the stories about them were invented by his clerical enemies to prove his inhuman cruelty or perhaps to convict him of sorcery. The day of experimental science had not yet dawned.

***Speculation
on social
questions***

Our "social sciences" were then regarded as a minor subdivision of theology. There was much writing on themes drawn from political science, but most of it was designed to elaborate or defend papal or imperial claims to universal supremacy. The development of Roman, canon, and English common law led to speculations about the nature of law in general, but it can hardly be said that the scientific study of jurisprudence had yet arisen. Writers on economic questions were theologians who included sections on usury and the "just price" in their treatises on ethics: their purpose, however, was to show businessmen how to reach heaven, not how to remain solvent in this world. In fact, several centuries were to pass before it occurred to anyone that social phenomena could be made the subject of scientific study.

34. THE FINE ARTS AND LITERATURE

THE great explosion of physical and intellectual energy that took place in western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was accompanied by a flowering of architecture and the fine arts. When the widespread devastation wrought during the invasions of the ninth and tenth centuries was being repaired, poverty at first compelled rather skimpy construction. Peace permitted the gradual accumulation of wealth, however, and men learned how to build more solidly. Eventually they created the Gothic style of architecture, which has been called the most glorious ever devised by man.

*Flowering
of art*

A wide variety of persons financed new construction during the twelfth century. Feudal lords erected stone castles far superior to those of earlier times, but military engineers rather than architects designed them. Likewise the communes were the scene of great building activity, but architects were still groping for an appropriate urban style. The magnificent guild halls and other public buildings, and the fine houses of rich merchants, did not come until a century or two later. As usual, the church was responsible for the finest examples of new architecture. In the earlier part of our period, monasteries were the chief builders, but the outstanding examples of Gothic architecture are the towering cathedrals built by bishops in the cities of northern France and England in the thirteenth century.

*The new
architecture*

During the early Middle Ages the larger churches built in western Europe followed the basilica pattern, adopted by the Christians in the days of Constantine (see page 282). Essentially their churches were large halls whose roofs were supported by two or more rows

*Roman-
esque
styles*



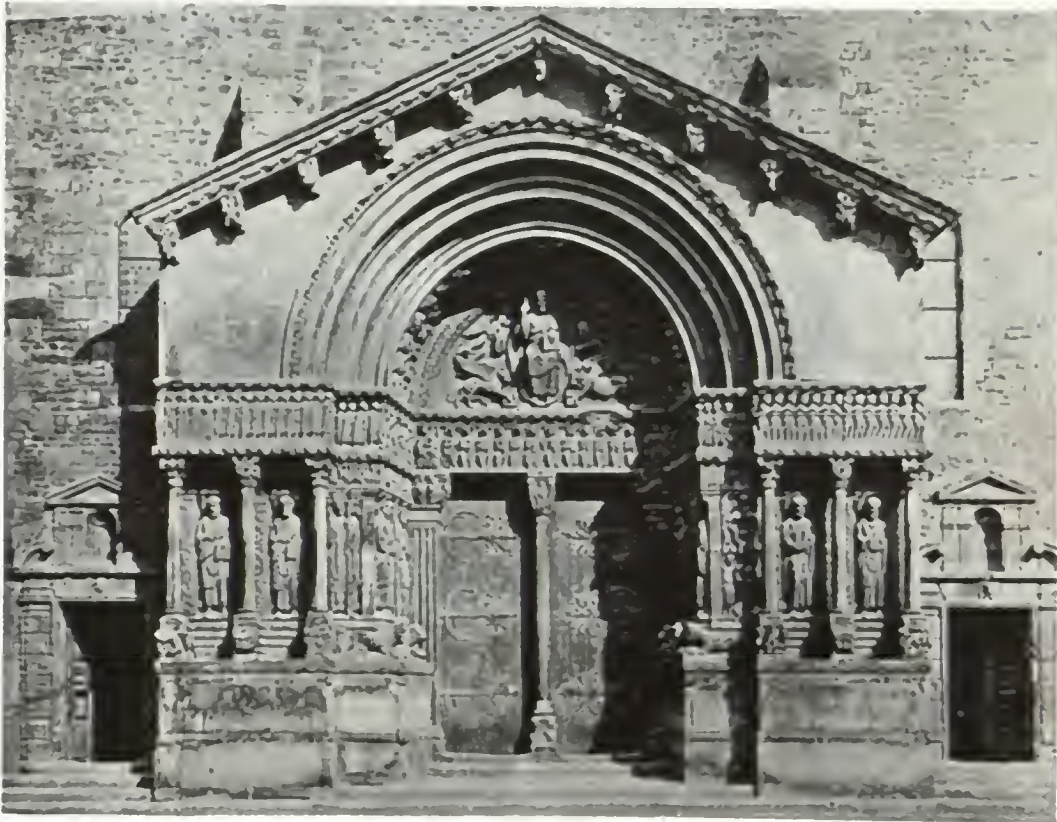
SANT' AMBROGIO, MILAN. Built in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, this church illustrates the transition from the basilica to the romanesque type of architecture. The atrium, or enclosed court in front of the church, was a common feature of the basilica, but was later abandoned. The interior of the church is thoroughly romanesque. The atrium and the campanile (bell tower) at the right probably date from the ninth century.

of pillars inside, but as they were of wooden construction they were subject to decay and fire. In the eleventh century walls were often built of stone, but roofs were still of timber and tile. The next century saw the first important advance when builders began constructing roofs of stone, thereby inventing the "Romanesque" style of architecture. They used the form of roof known as the "barrel vault," which resembled half a barrel split lengthwise and laid on the side walls—or, in the larger churches, on the pillars formerly used to support the roof—while lesser vaults covered the aisles between pillars and wall. This architectural form was not very satisfactory, however, because

the round shape of the roof prevented height and its weight required such strong walls that it was unsafe to introduce many windows. Romanesque churches were rather low and dark, cold and gloomy. Nevertheless, they were often built in Italy and southern France, where there was plenty of sun and heat. As the doors and windows of the churches have semicircular tops to harmonize with the vaulted roof, these rounded windows provide an easy identification of Romanesque architecture. Its essential feature, however, was the barrel vault.

The transition from Romanesque to Gothic came in the later twelfth century. It was in large part a matter of engineering, with the new style characterized by pointed arches. The pointed arch enabled Gothic architects to erect lofty churches, filled with light from many windows. Thus the top of the arched roof of the cathedral

*Gothic
styles*



ST. TROPHINE, ARLES (Romanesque Portal, Twelfth Century).



ABBAY CHURCH, VÉZELAY (*Twelfth Century*).

at Amiens is 141 feet above the pavement, while that at Beauvais is 154 feet high. This Gothic architecture was invented in northern France, and here the most famous cathedrals were built. Notre Dame at Paris was begun about 1160 and finished in 1235; Chartres was begun soon after the destruction of the old cathedral by fire in 1194; Rheims was erected after a similar fire in 1210, and the present structure was completed within a hundred years; Amiens, dating from the same period, is sometimes said to be the most perfect structurally of all the cathedrals. Another famous example of thir-



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL (Thirteenth-Century Gothic).

teenth-century Gothic architecture is the Sainte Chapelle in Paris, which gives the impression of being built almost wholly of colored glass. The superbly beautiful monastery of Mont-Saint-Michel, covering a small island just off the southwest coast of Normandy, shows a rather different Gothic style.

The thirteenth century was also the period of the great English cathedrals, which often were built by French architects or under French inspiration. The Romanesque cathedral at Durham, begun in 1093, shows the older style at its best, but the cathedrals at Canterbury, Lincoln, and Salisbury are fine examples of English

*English
Gothic*



SALISBURY CATHEDRAL (Interior).

Gothic. In the southern countries, however, Gothic architecture never took root. Two or three centuries later Italian architects began to ridicule it, applying the epithet "Gothic" to imply that this style was barbarian, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was a great revival of enthusiasm for Gothic architecture.

**Gothic
sculptures**

Other artists coöperated with the architects to beautify these churches. Sculptors did so well that modern critics have declared the thirteenth to be one of the great centuries in the whole history of sculpture. The inside and outside of the cathedrals were decorated



MONT-SAINT-MICHEL. (*Galloway*)

with statues and other fine carvings. With great skill the sculptors blended their works into the lines of the building, of which they seem to be an essential part. The cathedrals therefore do not seem cluttered with superfluous works of art, nor is the observer's attention distracted by countless trivial decorations: such weakening additions came only in later centuries, when artistic taste was declining. Romanesque churches had much wall space, which painters skillfully decorated with frescoes, but the Gothic cathedral offered few opportunities of this sort. On the other hand, Gothic architecture left large spaces free for windows, which were filled with amazing works in colored glass. Sometimes bits of different colored glass, usually bright reds and blues, were combined to form geometrical designs, but the larger windows usually pictured scenes from the Old and New Testaments or the lives of the saints. Perhaps the glassman's

NOTRE DAME DE PARIS. (*Metropolitan Museum of Art*)

art has never again shown the perfection attained in the famous windows at Chartres.

**Gregorian
music**

Medieval cathedrals were not ordinarily used for preaching but for religious spectacles. In fact, it would have been difficult for a preacher to be heard distinctly in these huge edifices. Everything was so arranged, however, that the people filling the main body of the church could clearly see what was going on in the choir and at the altar. The cathedral was the scene of many a stately procession and, above all, of the ceremonies of the Mass. Here the prayers were not spoken but sung, using the Gregorian chant, a type of music developed in the Middle Ages. When perfected in the thirteenth century, Gregorian music was marvelously adapted to its religious purpose. Every cathedral had choirs of men and boys who were

professional musicians. There were also pipe organs—another medieval invention—which were large enough to fill huge cathedrals with their tones, and some of which were quite elaborate. Musicians thus coöperated with their fellow artists to make the cathedral and its services the supreme manifestation of the creative artistic genius of the Middle Ages.

VERNACULAR LITERATURE

In conclusion we turn to the literature of the Middle Ages. We have seen that most medieval writers wrote Latin when discussing such serious subjects as theology, philosophy, law, science, and history. As they were scholars writing for other scholars, they used the international language of scholarship. Sometimes, however, these Latin writers composed lighter works, such as the songs of students. A late example of this "Goliardic" verse—so called after a mythical bishop, Goliard—may be seen in the *Gaudeamus igitur* ("Therefore let us rejoice, while we are young") still found in a few college song books. But literary men who desired wider audiences or richer patrons preferred the popular, or "vernacular," languages spoken by laymen.

The Romans had carried the Latin language to all parts of the West, but the collapse of their empire, followed by the Germanic invasions, ended western Europe's linguistic unity. In regions where Rome's cultural influence had been strong and the invaders not numerous, debased forms of Latin continued to be spoken; elsewhere it was replaced by Germanic or Celtic tongues. Each of these languages was spoken in countless dialects, however, and only at the very end of the Middle Ages did our modern languages take form.

In the thirteenth century more than a dozen dialects of French fell into two great groups: north of the Loire men spoke the *langue d'oïl*, south of it the *langue d'oc*, from which language the province of Languedoc took its name. (These names are derived from the different words used for "yes": in the north the Latin *hoc ille*, "that's it," became *oïl*, and eventually *oui*; in the south men simply said *hoc*, "that"; in Italy and Spain they preferred to say *si*, from the Latin *sic*, "so.") Modern French is descended from the dialect of the Ile de France, but at one time excellent poetry was written in the Provençal dialect of the *langue d'oc*. In the Spanish peninsula, likewise, there were many dialects. The most important was Castilian, from which modern literary Spanish is descended, but the people of the

**Goliardic
Latin verse**

**Decline
of Latin**

**Romance
languages**

west continued to speak the language that became Portuguese, and in the east they spoke Catalan, which is closer to Provençal than to Castilian. In Italy there were at least fourteen well-defined dialects in 1300, several of which are still spoken, but ever since the days of Dante, literary Italian has been the dialect of Florence and Tuscany.

**Other
medieval
tongues**

Many Germanic dialects were spoken in central Europe, and not until the time of Luther, in the sixteenth century, did Saxon come to prevail over the others as the literary language. Other dialects developed into Danish, Swedish, Dutch, Flemish, and English. The Celtic dialects had virtually died out in France before the coming of the Germans, but in the British Isles they were still spoken. The Anglo-Saxon invaders of the fifth century imposed their Germanic language upon the eastern and central parts of England, but Celtic dialects—Welsh and Cornish—continued to be spoken in the west, whence refugees carried them across the Channel to Brittany. Other Celtic dialects were spoken in Ireland and the Scottish highlands. These Celtic languages are still spoken by a few people, but they are now giving way before English (or French, in Brittany) in spite of the efforts of a few romantics to revive them. The Norman invaders of England spoke a dialect of French which remained the aristocratic language of the island for two or three centuries, but eventually it blended with Anglo-Saxon to form English. This double origin is largely responsible for the exceptional richness and flexibility of modern English.

**Germanic
epics**

Long before the coming of the Romans, Germans and Celts had recited to each other stories and poems that later cropped up again in the vernacular literatures of the Middle Ages. The first such poem to be written down (about 700) was *Beowulf*, the Anglo-Saxon epic. In about three thousand lines it tells of its hero's fights with a man-eating monster and later with a dragon. The action of the story takes place in Denmark, England is nowhere mentioned, and though the author of our version was somewhat Christianized, his poem sets forth the basic ideas of Germanic paganism. Other examples of old Germanic literature survive in the various Norse *Eddas*, written down between 900 and 1250, and in the *Nibelungenlied*, composed in Austria about 1200. The earlier *Eddas* are our best source of information regarding the ideals and mythology of the early Germans, for their authors were quite untouched by Christianity, but while the *Nibelungenlied* contains many vague memories of the Burgundian,

Hun, and Ostrogothic invasions, its author was deeply influenced by Christianity and by the feudal and courtly ideals of the twelfth century.

Chansons de Geste and Troubadours

The twelfth-century Renaissance revived these poems of heroic adventure in the new form commonly called *chansons de geste* ("songs of deeds"). In many ways these *chansons* resemble the old Germanic epics, but their heroes have been carefully Christianized and feudalized. The earliest and most famous is the *Chanson de Roland*, composed in Normandy about 1100. The action of this poem takes place in Spain at the time of Charlemagne, more than three hundred years before. The author knew little about the country and the times, for romantic dreaming had long since disfigured the truth almost beyond recognition. Nevertheless, he gives us excellent pictures of the ideals of knighthood and of the crusading enthusiasm of the twelfth century. Largely because of this *Chanson*, the legends of Charlemagne and Roland remained themes popular with lesser poets. The Spanish epic, *Poema del Cid*, dating from the middle of the twelfth century and dealing with the exploits of an actual leader in the reconquest, provided Spain with a national hero to rival Charlemagne in France. The Cid of the poem bears little resemblance to the historical figure, who had been dead for barely fifty years (see page 447), which shows us, among other things, how quickly legend can replace true history when a poetic imagination is at work.

**Epics of
Charle-
magne**

The *chansons de geste* originated in northern France, where bards entertained the bellicose nobility with their martial epics. Meantime in the south of France another type of poetry, the love songs of the troubadours, was winning aristocratic approval. Here in the south life was more peaceful and pleasant than in the north; here traditions of culture had been better preserved from ancient times; here some of the finest examples of Romanesque architecture were created; here an interest in learning and the intellectual life led to the early fame of the university at Montpellier; and here students were constantly passing to and from Italy, singing their Goliardic songs. At the same time this region was being fertilized from the south by new ideas brought through kindred Catalonia from Spain and the Moslems. The aristocrats of Provence and Languedoc were more

**Provençal
poetry**

truly civilized than their knightly rivals in the north, and they were responsible for the great outburst of lyric poetry which we still associate with the troubadours.

Troubadours

The first of the famous troubadours was William, duke of Aquitaine (1071-1127), who went on the First Crusade and whose granddaughter, Eleanor of Aquitaine, married Henry II and became queen of England. Other troubadours were likewise members of the nobility, but still others were of humble origin. In all, about four hundred troubadours wrote in the *langue d'oc*, and hundreds of their poems have been preserved. When Eleanor went to Normandy, and later to England, she took with her a few troubadours, who introduced the new style of poetry into the north. Presently lyric poets called "trouvères," who wrote in the *langue d'oïl*, began to rival the troubadours of Provence. From France the new enthusiasm for lyric poetry passed to Germany, where such poets were called "Minnesingers." The finest of them was Walther von der Vogelweide (c. 1170-1230), a native of the Austrian Tirol. Then, in 1208, Pope Innocent III launched his crusade against the Albigensians, and the brilliant cultural life of southern France was ruthlessly destroyed. A few troubadours escaped to Italy and Sicily, where they were welcomed by the Emperor Frederick II, but before the end of the century troubadours had ceased to exist.

Romantic

love poetry

The principal theme of troubadour poetry was romantic love. In the early Middle Ages men of the upper classes had often expressed rather low opinions of women, an attitude reflected in the *chansons de geste*. Now the troubadours began to idealize women. Perhaps this change of heart was due in part to the generally refining influence of polite life and civilization, under which other things than fighting may seem worth while to a well-born male, but there can be little doubt that the troubadours were much influenced by the Arabic poetry and song of Spain, in which romantic love played a prominent part. Many of the poetic meters used by the troubadours were of Arabic origin, and the guitar, on which they often accompanied their songs, was a musical instrument brought to Spain by the Moslems.

A note of

insincerity

The troubadour devoted himself to singing the praises of his lady, to promising her loyalty and constancy, and to repining when his love was not requited. Often the songs were beautiful and convincing, but eventually style and sentiment became formalized.

Poets seemed to be more in love with love than with their ladies, and sometimes no lady existed outside the poet's own imagination. The later troubadours exercised their wit in developing cryptic and obscure styles, until their works became virtually incomprehensible. Such a poet might even accompany his poem with a prose commentary in which he disclosed at great length what it really meant!

This preoccupation with love, coming at the same time as the twelfth-century revival of the classics, encouraged poets to seek out what the ancient writers had said on the subject. Ovid was widely read, especially his *Art of Love*. The new attitude toward women also penetrated the code of chivalry. In real life the knight-errant remained what he had always been—a bruiser characterized principally by lechery, brutality, and arrogance, if we are to believe his contemporary critics—but in literature he took a turn for the better. The ideal knight became a great lover as well as a doughty man of war. In combat he wore his lady's colors, for her love he lived, and for her love he died—or at least he so declared on every possible occasion. These changing views caused the old *chansons de geste* gradually to give way before a new type of epic called the “romance.” The classical revival encouraged poets to choose their themes from antiquity, and they wrote long poems in the new style about the Trojan War, Thebes, Alexander the Great, and Aeneas. Others reworked the Charlemagne legends to suit the new taste. Most popular of all, however, were the romances based on the Celtic mythology centering about King Arthur and his Round Table.

The Arthurian legend was first popularized by Geoffrey of Monmouth (c. 1100–1154), a Welsh bishop whose *Historia Britonum* purportedly was based on an old Celtic manuscript from Brittany. Its value as a history of England is virtually nil, but from it later poets took the stories of Arthur and his knights, Merlin, and King Lear. The most important of these poets was Chrétien de Troyes (d. 1189), a trouvère at the court of the count of Champagne, who retold the stories of Lancelot, Yvain, Percival, and the Holy Grail (see page 517). Within an amazingly short time his poetry was known and imitated in England, Norway, Germany, and Italy, and its wide popularity is one more illustration of the fact that in literature, as in so many other aspects of the intellectual life, France led western Europe in the thirteenth century.

**The poetry
of chivalry**

**The
Arthurian
romances**

*Bourgeois Literature***Literature
of castle
and of town**

The literary works mentioned in the preceding section were composed to entertain the feudal nobility of western Europe. Many of the troubadours were nobles themselves while others wandered from castle to castle, or perhaps remained in one place for years, as the pensioners of noble patrons. They expressed the ideals of the aristocracy, and it might even be said that they looked at the world from the windows of a feudal castle. At the same time, however, the burghers of the towns and communes were beginning to desire literary entertainment, and they were not satisfied with the literature emanating from the castle. They found other subjects more interesting than the technique of a love affair between an idealized knight and a fair lady who never existed. Their quest of entertainment led to the rise of new forms of literature. Early productions of the new types rarely showed high artistic merit, yet they inaugurated styles of literary expression which in due time replaced the courtly epic.

**Miracle and
morality
plays**

Our first example of the new literature is the drama, which gained importance in the thirteenth-century towns. In their early days, Christians had been most critical of the theater, and during the Dark Ages dramatic entertainment apparently ceased to exist. Centuries later priests began to elaborate their church services occasionally by adding bits of dialogue and acting out simple stories from the Bible or the lives of the saints. At first such performances took place in the church, later in the church yard, and still later in the market place. The priestly actors were replaced by laymen, and later by professionals. Thus the modern theater, like that of ancient Greece, was born of religion. As in ancient Greece, the themes of medieval plays were taken from religious history, and performances came on the days of great religious festivals. The earlier plays were called "mystery plays" or "miracle plays," because of their subject matter, but presently they were supplemented by "morality plays" with new plots and with the various characters allegorically symbolizing virtues and vices. In spite of their religious origin and nature, these early plays gave opportunities for much clowning and broad humor, and they delighted the hearts of young and old with the spectacle of Herod ranting or of devils pursuing an unhappy priest into hell. Only in the towns could such plays find adequate audiences, and presently it became customary for the craft guilds to sponsor them.

The new literature also provided countless fables and stories, a few collections of which have been preserved. The French *fabliaux* were stories in verse about animals who represented human beings, quarreling, fighting, and cheating each other much as men do. The most famous of them is the *Roman de Renard*, a long poem (about forty thousand lines) which apparently was the work of various authors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The hero, Renard the fox, always outwits his fiercer and stronger rivals, and often he makes them look ridiculous. It was quite obvious that the lions and wolves really lived in castles or bishops' palaces while Renard did not. Other stories deal simply with men and women, usually of the burgher class. Thus the tale of *Aucassin and Nicolette* tells charmingly of the love of a young nobleman for a slave girl. In general these thirteenth-century stories were not great literature, but in the next century they were given polished form by such accomplished artists as Boccaccio and Chaucer.

Fabliaux

Perhaps the most popular literary production of the thirteenth century was the *Roman de la Rose*. This poem, as it now stands, was the work of two authors. The first four thousand lines, by Guillaume de Lorris (c. 1237), are an aristocratic romance of courtly love, with the hero seeking the favor of his ladylove, symbolized by a rose. As in the morality plays and the *fabliaux*, there is constant use of allegory, and the characters are given such symbolic names as Youth, Hope, Jealousy, and Danger. About forty years later a Parisian burgher, Jean de Meun, added eighteen thousand lines to this poem. His part, much inferior artistically to Guillaume's, is filled with mocking skepticism, anti-clericalism, and all the other bourgeois notions of the day. The author apparently put everything he knew into his poem, filling it with long speeches on every imaginable subject. In consequence, the *Roman de la Rose* has been compared to a Gothic cathedral, or to the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, as a compendium of, and a guide to, the thought of the Middle Ages.

**Roman de
la Rose**

Dante Alighieri

The most brilliant of all syntheses of medieval thought was made by the Italian poet Dante Alighieri (1265-1321). Being the son of an eminent lawyer, Dante received an excellent literary and political education. In his day, as usually, Florence was distracted by the quarrels of Guelphs and Ghibellines. In 1300 Dante, then a moderate

**Dante's
political
career**



DANTE ALIGHIERI. This portrait of Dante was painted by his fellow townsman and friend, Giotto di Bondone, about 1300. (*Bargello, Florence*)

Guelph, held an office in the city government, but when Guelph extremists seized power a year later, he was exiled (1302). The remainder of his life he passed wandering from one Italian city to another, until death overtook him at Ravenna almost twenty years later. Even in his early days Dante had expressed a low opinion of the papacy, and exile made him its bitter opponent. His bitterness turned especially against Boniface VIII, by whose agency the moderate faction at Florence had been ousted and pursued with great vindictiveness. He also became his city's severest critic, stern, austere, and disillusioned, yet he continued to love her as few others have. At

heart, however, Dante was primarily an Italian patriot who believed that only a strong secular prince from the outside could end the constant struggles that were ruining Florence and all the Italian cities. He therefore became a Ghibelline.

But Dante was not primarily a politician or a statesman. First and always he was a poet and a scholar, well acquainted with the best thought of his day. He knew and admired the poems of the Provençal troubadours, and his earliest writings differed but little from theirs. He studied the Latin classics long and lovingly, especially the poets, and above all Vergil, whom he hailed as his master. He was familiar with Aristotle and the other scientific and philosophical works translated from the Greek and Arabic. Though he knew no Arabic himself, recent studies have suggested that he was deeply indebted to Arabic poets whose works had been translated or imitated by others. His whole view of the world and the hereafter was saturated with the theological views of St. Thomas Aquinas. And finally, mention must be made of Beatrice Portinari, the young girl who was immortalized by Dante's love. After a first meeting, when they were only nine years old, they did not see each other again for several years and then only rarely before her death at twenty-four. She married another man, and presumably she never suspected his feelings for her. Dante's love was of the ideal variety, sung by the troubadours, inspiring and shaping his immortal writings.

He tells us the story of his love for Beatrice in the *Vita Nuova* ("Young Life"), in which he published several brief poems written in her honor, along with prose commentaries and explanations after the manner of the decadent troubadours. In the closing chapter, Dante tells of a wonderful vision he saw about a year after her death and expresses the hope that some day he will be able to write concerning her "what hath not before been written of any woman." This book and several minor poems apparently were completed before his exile. Other works, written after that disaster, include the *Convivio* ("Banquet"), which is an uncompleted treatise on various philosophical questions, the Latin *De Monarchia*, in which he sets forth his Ghibelline views on church and state (perhaps answering Boniface VIII's *Unam sanctam*), and the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, a treatise written in Latin urging the use of Italian rather than Latin. But the whole of Dante's life and thought is summed up in the *Divine Comedy*, which he composed during his exile and which, critics agree, is one of the half-dozen greatest poems ever written.

Dante
a scholar
and poet

His
lesser
works

**La Divina
Commedia**

This *Divine Comedy* tells how, in Easter week of 1300, the poet made a journey through Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, and describes what he saw while there. On its face, the story is quite simple, yet behind its various episodes lie complex allegories and a symbolism that only commentaries can explain. Thus Dante's guide through Hell and Purgatory was the poet Vergil, symbolizing human reason, but who, being a pagan, could not enter Paradise; Beatrice, symbolizing divine revelation, conducted him through the greater part of Paradise; but at the very end, only the mystic St. Bernard could lead the poet into the presence of God. In the course of his long journey Dante saw and spoke with countless persons, some of them great figures from the past, others his contemporaries. Hell abounded with popes and princes, debauchees, great criminals, and traitors, and a special place was ready for Boniface VIII, who was expected shortly. As the poet and his guide descended deeper and deeper, Hell became darker and the sinners whom they met became progressively worse, until finally, at the very center of the earth, they came to Lucifer himself (Satan) with the three most odious of all sinners, Brutus and Cassius who slew their benefactor (Julius Caesar) and Judas Iscariot who betrayed his Lord. The humanity found in Purgatory is perhaps less interesting, and the poet fills in with several discourses on the sad state of Italy and Florence, prophesying a coming liberator. But even the saints in Paradise hold our attention in spite of their rather long-winded discussions of theology.

**"The sun
and all the
other stars"**

Such is the bare plot of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. It is a poem that must be read and studied to be appreciated, but it is one that well repays whatever labor it exacts. It is a mighty synthesis of all that is best in medieval thought. But the poem is more than this—much more. It is the confession of faith of a man who was a deep and original thinker and who had seen and suffered much. It is the love story of a great poet who, as a boy, fell in love with a girl whom he scarcely knew, whose whole life was illuminated by an idealization of that love, who loved his country dearly but was cast out as an exile, who learned that Divine Love had created Hell and Purgatory as well as Paradise, and who finally experienced a beatific vision of God, love for whom "moves the sun and all the other stars." With these words the poem ends.

XIII

Papal Palace, Avignon (*Ewing Galloway*)



DECLINE AND RENAISSANCE

A WORLD IN DECAY—THE EARLY RENAISSANCE

Western Europe	The Church	Economic History	Renaissance
	1303 "Terrible Day of Anagni"	Steady decline of prices through century	d. 1321 Dante
	1305- Bobolian Captivity		
	1378 (Popes at Avignon)	1317 Venetians send out Flanders Fleet	
	1324 Defensar Pacis	1344 Bonk failures at Florence	d. 1337 Giotto
1337- Hundred Years' War			
1453			
1346 Battle of Crécy	1351- Statutes of Provisors and Praemunire (England)	1348 Black Death	
	1353		
1360 Treaty of Brétigny	1378- Great Schism	1357 Jacques in France	d. 1374 Petrarch
	1415	1381 Wat Tyler (England)	d. 1375 Boccaccio
	1409 Council of Pisa	Weavers revolt (Italy)	d. 1400 Chaucer
	1414- Council of Constance		d. 1410 Froissart
	1418		
1415 Battle of Agincourt	1415 John Huss burned	1420- Henry the Navigator encourages exploration	d. 1415 Chrysoloras
1420 Treaty of Troyes	1431 Council of Basel		c. 1450 Invention of printing
1431 Joan of Arc burned	1439 Attempted reunion of Eastern and Western Churches		d. 1455 Fro Angelico
			d. 1456 Ghiberti
1453 End of the war [Turks take Constantinople]			d. 1457 Valla
			d. 1466 Donatello
1455- Wars of the Roses	1447- Pope Nicholas V		
1485	1455		
1461- Louis XI unites France		d. 1456 Jacques Coeur	1475 Michelangelo born
1483			1477 Coxton prints in England
1469- Lorenzo de' Medici rules Florence	1471- Pope Sixtus IV	d. 1464 Cosimo de' Medici	1482 Ficino translates Plato
1492	1484		
1479- Ferdinand and Isabella in Spain		d. 1469 Jacob Fugger	1483 Raphael born
1504			
1485- Henry VIII in England			d. 1484 Villon
1509	1492- Pope Alexander VI		1497 da Vinci paints Last Supper
1494 French invasion of Italy [Charles VIII]	1503		

35. A WORLD IN DECAY

THE thirteenth century saw the climax of medieval civilization. In these years we find brilliant expression given to all those ideas and institutions which we consider characteristic of the Middle Ages: world empire and papal monarchy, feudal lords and peasants, crusades and chivalry, communes and guilds, parliaments and universities, scholasticism and Gothic architecture, *chansons de geste* and troubadours. In each case, however, decline began late in that century. The Holy Roman Empire had lost in its titanic struggle with the papacy before the death of the last Hohenstaufen (1254); Boniface VIII (d. 1303) was the last of the great medieval popes; the crusading movement finally collapsed with the fall of Acre (1291); and the death of Dante (1321) concluded the literary activity characteristic of the Middle Ages. The next two hundred years were a period of disintegration and decline, but at the same time a fresh spirit was appearing in Europe that would soon turn world history in new directions. This new spirit is sometimes called that of the "Renaissance," though it was less a "rebirth" than the birth of something new.

More than most others, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were a period when one age was dying while another was coming to birth, and the telling of its history therefore depends to an exceptional degree upon the sympathies and point of view of the historian. If the historian is primarily interested in the Middle Ages, and enthusiastic over the great achievements of the thirteenth century, he is likely to regard the next two hundred years as a dismal period of decay, or at best as an appendage to a tale that is told. Wars then ravaged the countryside, forms of government changed, economic life declined, the church decayed, Gothic art deteriorated, scholastic philosophy lost itself in words, the minds

*The end of
medieval
times*

*An age that
is dying?*

of men seemed to be softening: this is what the medievalists tell us, and what they say contains much truth. The ideals of chivalry and religion, once the inspiration of medieval men, now lost their power and people descended into a jungle of brutality and superstition, anxiety and fear. Their thoughts easily turned to sin, suffering, and death. Though they continued to mouth the phrases of former times, these phrases no longer carried conviction. Men talked much of crusades, for example, but no formidable armies marched out to redeem the Holy Sepulcher. When the Turks took Constantinople in 1453, a few western Europeans became greatly excited, as well they might, but when they began preaching a new crusade, auditors shrugged their shoulders and walked away.

*Or one that
is coming
to birth?*

On the other hand, historians who are less enamored of the Middle Ages often paint a glowing picture of these same two centuries, which they call the period of the Italian Renaissance. Such writers do not regard the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a period of decadence and despair but as a time when new hope and new vitality were sweeping over Europe. Men broke the shackles of the past, forgot the gloomy otherworldliness of the Middle Ages, and took a renewed interest in the world about them. They revived letters and the arts. Realizing that their ideas and ideals were not those of medieval times, the people of this glorious age boasted that they had brought light to a darkened world and that with them a new day had dawned. What scholars of this school tell us likewise contains much truth. There is no need, however, to choose between these rival versions of history. Each gives us one side of a very complex story each tells part of the truth but not the whole of it, and each is largely true in what it affirms. In the present chapter, therefore, we shall first dwell upon the decline of the medieval system, and then we shall discuss the new ideas that arose while it was passing away.

THE HUNDRED YEARS' WAR

*A war
fought
feudally*

The history of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in western Europe was dominated to a great extent by the long conflict between France and England that is known as the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453). This war provided many glorious exhibitions of feudal and chivalric ideals, but it was also the most conspicuous symptom of the general decay into which the medieval world had fallen. At the beginning of hostilities everyone "thought feudally." Kings stressed feudal

ideals in their excuses and pretexts for the war, battles were lost because a commander insisted upon fighting according to the rules of chivalry, and the various peace treaties (really armistices) were based on feudal conceptions of the proper treatment of a conquered foe. But when peace returned, much of France lay in ruins, people everywhere were suffering grievously, and feudalism stood discredited with all who could learn from their misfortunes. Men gradually put things together once more, but they rebuilt Europe along new and very different lines.

This long series of wars began when Edward III (1327–1377) was king of England and France was ruled by Philip VI (1328–1350), founder of the Valois dynasty. Each king was thoroughly medieval in his mentality, each was eager for glory of a feudal and martial sort, and each wished to appear in public as a chivalrous knight. But whereas Edward sometimes diluted his chivalry with common sense, Philip and his son John II (1350–1364) carried feudal punctilio to absurd extremes. As all these monarchs were feudal gentlemen, the mere fact that they were bankrupt did not hinder them from squandering money lavishly on their courts or from enjoying that most glorious—but also most expensive—of feudal diversions, foreign war. Nor did it take them long to discover noble pretexts for embarking upon adventures that held out such bright promises of glory.

The fact that Edward held part of Aquitaine as a fief from the French king was regarded as humiliating by both monarchs. Edward was reluctant to pay homage to another king, and, on the other hand, recent French raids into Aquitaine had convinced Philip that he could easily drive the loathsome foreigners out. Flanders was an equally fertile field of conflict. Great quantities of English wool were exported to this region, and as the export tax was a major item in Edward's revenue, he could scarcely avoid taking an interest in what happened there. For many years Flanders had been torn by a class struggle between workers and masters, and when the masters called for aid from their French overlord, Edward helped the rebels. At the same time the English accused the French of aiding Scots against them. The most grandiose and feudal pretext for war, however, was Edward's claim to be lawful heir to the French throne. Philip VI was descended from a younger son of Philip III (d. 1285), but Edward's mother was a daughter of Philip IV (d. 1314) and therefore a closer relative of the last Capetian. Edward based his claim upon this fact, even though courts had held that the French

*Kings in
quest of
glory*

*Aquitaine
and
Flanders*

king of France and their own lawful sovereign (1338). Not until two years later did the English destroy a French fleet off Sluys (in Flanders), after which they controlled the Channel and began looting Norman cities along the coast. But when bankruptcy compelled Edward to repudiate his debts—thereby ruining the most important bank in faraway Florence (1344)—more desperate measures became necessary and he decided to invade Flanders. He met a French army at Crécy, a village some fifty miles south of Calais, and won a famous victory (1346). English longbowmen there destroyed the flower of the French aristocracy, who bravely but insanely attacked while in the utmost confusion, charging the English lines about fifteen times in all. Edward then captured Calais after a long siege. For several years thereafter the French were distracted by domestic unrest, and the English limited their activities to plundering central France from Aquitaine. Ten years later they won a second major victory at Poitiers (1356). Here the booty included King John himself (who had succeeded Philip in 1350), one of his sons, and many of the high French nobility. John was taken as a prisoner to London, where he was permitted to live in regal style—at his own expense.

Being a true and gallant knight, John acknowledged defeat when it befell him, and agreed to very liberal peace terms, including a huge ransom and territories about equal to those held two centuries earlier by Henry II. The officials at Paris were less generous, however, and at last the English signed the Treaty of Brétigny (1360), by which they expanded their holdings in Aquitaine slightly, kept Calais and Ponthieu (the region around Crécy), accepted a much smaller ransom, and renounced their claim to the French throne. John was released as soon as the first installment of the ransom was paid, but when a son (Louis of Anjou) broke his parole two years later, John, being a chivalrous gentleman, voluntarily returned to London, where he soon died (1364).

*Treaty of
Brétigny
(1360)*

During John's absence, France had been governed by his son, later Charles V "the Wise" (1364-1380). Acting as regent, Charles rejected the absurd treaty agreed to by his father, paid the first installment of the ransom, and began the reconstruction of France. His first step was to marry off his sister to Gian Galeazzo Visconti, the future tyrant of Milan, from whom he received a handsome monetary payment. (Moralists are a trifle unjust to Charles when they criticize him for thus selling his sister to a prominent gangster:

*Charles V
as regent*



he had been brought up under the code of high chivalry, which regarded such marriages as quite proper.) This marriage was eventually to have momentous consequences for France and Italy, but at the time it helped very little, for King John straightway spent most of the money on lavish festivities in honor of his release from captivity.

During the next several years neither France nor England had much desire for more war. England was overwhelmed with domestic difficulties, and when Edward died, he was succeeded by his young grandson, Richard II (1377-1399). The new king spent his time quarreling with his barons, who eventually dethroned and murdered him. Conditions in France were even worse. English looting had gutted some of the richest provinces in France, and looting did not cease with the end of hostilities. During the war both belligerents had employed foreign mercenaries, whom they simply stopped paying when peace was signed. These ruffians, organized in "free companies," continued to overrun France at will, seizing castles and even defeating royal armies sent to destroy them. Charles tried to divert them to foreign countries, notably Spain, but they soon drifted back to France, which was richer and easier to rob. For a while much of the Rhone Valley was in their hands. Nevertheless, Charles's labors eventually bore fruit, and in 1369 he felt strong enough to resume the war with England. He appointed new commanders, many of whom were men of ignoble birth who cared nothing for the current romantic nonsense about chivalry and who would rather fight from ambush than on a fair and open field. The English loudly called on heaven to witness the enemy's cowardly and treacherous behavior, and resumed their looting, but they were gradually driven from one province after another. When Charles died in 1380, they held only a few port cities in France.

*Civil wars
in England
and France*

Since the next king of France, Charles VI (1380-1422), was insane during the greater part of his reign, the kingdom was torn asunder by rival factions under the duke of Armagnac and the duke of Burgundy. At first the Burgundian faction was the more popular, especially with the bourgeoisie, for it sympathized with the commercial classes and favored peace with England. The Armagnacs, on the other hand, represented the old feudal aristocracy and advocated a renewal of the war. The bitterness of the factions toward each other was so great that when Henry V of England revived the old claim to the French throne and resumed the war (1415) Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy (1419-1467), entered into an alliance with him. The English again invaded northern France, where they won a third astonishing victory over the French at Agincourt, some twenty miles from Crécy (1415). Apparently the French aristocrats of the Armagnac faction still thought they were showing off in a tournament rather than fighting a real war.

*Agincourt
(1415)*

**Treaty of
Troyes
(1420)**

During the next few years Henry occupied Normandy and much of northern France, after which he entered into the alliance with the duke of Burgundy (1419) and compelled the French to sign the Treaty of Troyes (1420). By this treaty Charles VI disinherited his son (later Charles VII), adopted Henry V as his regent and heir, married him to his daughter Catherine, and allowed him to keep all France north of the Loire as well as Aquitaine. When both Henry and Charles VI died, two years later, Henry VI (aged nine months, the son of Henry V and Catherine) was proclaimed king of England and, a few weeks later, king of France. His uncle the duke of Bedford acted as regent in Paris, ruling northern France, and he brought English power on the Continent to its apogee.

**Joan
of Arc**

The last stages of the war may be briefly summarized. The most spectacular episodes centered around Joan of Arc (1412-1431), an illiterate but pious peasant girl who sincerely believed that her favorite saints had ordered her to have Charles VII crowned at Rheims and to drive the English from France. In 1429 she persuaded Charles to let her take part in the relief of Orléans, then under siege by Bedford. The city was saved, and two months later Charles VII was crowned at Rheims. A year later Joan was captured by the Burgundians, sold by them to the British, tried for witchcraft and heresy, and burned at the stake in Rouen (1431). As Charles did not wish to owe his crown to a heretic and a witch, he had her conviction reversed in 1456. Late in the nineteenth century there sprang up in France a renewed interest in Joan, and she was canonized as St. Joan in 1920.

**The end
of the war
(1453)**

Joan of Arc might be dead, but the spirit with which she had inspired the French armies still lived. The duke of Burgundy repudiated his alliance with the English (1435) and made peace with Charles VII, who entered Paris a year later. After the French army had been reconditioned along new lines, fighting on a large scale was resumed, and by 1453 the French had regained everything except Calais. In the last years of the war they used recently invented artillery extensively for battering down English castles. Calais remained in English hands until 1558, however, and the English kings continued to call themselves kings of France until 1802, but today the Channel Islands (Jersey and Guernsey) are all that remains of the vast English empire in France.

ADVANCING ROYAL ABSOLUTISM

When the Valois kings began to rule France in 1328, the country was rich and happy after many years of peace, and both in arms and in culture France was the leading state in Europe. Unfortunately, however, the early Valois were neither efficient nor popular rulers, and when they sought glory on the field of battle, they suffered the disasters of Crécy and Poitiers. The monarchy was discredited, crushing taxation became necessary, and many Frenchmen began to say that their representatives in parliament should have a greater voice in the government. When the estates-general met in 1357, one year after Poitiers, a Parisian merchant named Etienne Marcel took the lead in demanding increased powers for that body. The regent, Charles V, was forced to accept the *Grande Ordonnance*, which provided that the estates should vote on all taxes and military levies, nominate members of the royal council, and assemble regularly whether summoned by the king or not. These estates, representing the clergy, the feudal aristocracy, and the rich merchants of the towns, thus checked the power of the king in feudal style, as in England under Magna Carta, but the *Grande Ordonnance* did not long remain in force. At this very moment, hunger and general distress resulting from the war were causing extensive rioting in Paris, peasant *jacqueries* (rebellions) were disturbing the provinces (see page 625), and Marcel foolishly discredited himself with his peers by seeking the support of these malcontents. The aristocracy turned against him, Marcel was murdered (1358), and Charles, who had fled Paris, presently reentered the capital and denounced the *Ordonnance*.

**Weakness
of the
French king**

Six years later, when Charles V (1364–1380) began to rule in his own name, he conducted the government quite efficiently. The general distress was mitigated and, when war was resumed in 1369, French armies were more successful. These armies consisted largely of mercenaries whose loyalty went to their employer, the king, rather than to feudal lords; and at the same time a bureaucracy of trained experts, responsible to the king, took over much of the routine work of government. Before his death in 1380, Charles had convinced most Frenchmen that the royal government could govern better than the estates. During the long reign of the insane Charles VI (1380–1422) factions of the nobility again tried to control the central government,

Charles V

but it occurred to no one that the estates-general should be strengthened. In fact, the estates met but rarely.

**Revival
of royal
power**

Charles VII (1422-1461), whom Joan of Arc had caused to be crowned at Rheims, has been called the most worthless creature that ever sat upon the throne of France. Though the English were driven from France in his day, these military successes were due to his assistants rather than to Charles's own virtues, and the necessities of war strengthened the central government, regardless of who was king. Moreover, the feudal nobility, who were the king's chief opponents, had been decimated at Agincourt, and they never regained their old power. And finally, the wars greatly stimulated national patriotism. This patriotism, which is well exemplified in Joan of Arc, centered around the king—even so worthless a king as Charles VII. At the beginning of the Hundred Years' War everyone attached his loyalty to his immediate superior in the feudal hierarchy, but at its end most Frenchmen were loyal primarily to the king. When Louis XI (1461-1483) finally succeeded his father, he was therefore able to take great strides in consolidating the royal power.

**The duchy
of Burgundy**

The fifteenth century is also the period of the rise and fall of the dukes of Burgundy as the most powerful of French vassals. Their famous duchy is not to be confused with the medieval Kingdom of Burgundy, whose capital had been at Arles in southern France, or with the neighboring Free County of Burgundy (Franche-Comté). It had been one of the great fiefs of the French kings ever since the eleventh century, and when its ducal line died out in 1361, King John conferred the duchy upon his youngest son, Philip the Bold (1363-1404). During the troubled years following Philip's death his able and aggressive successors extended their territorial holdings, bringing northeastern France, almost the whole of the Netherlands, and Luxembourg under their rule. For the first time since Lothair, grandson of Charlemagne, this central region enjoyed political unity, and it became the richest and most civilized region in northern Europe. In his last days Philip the Good (1419-1467) held a compact territory extending from Switzerland to the North Sea, with only Alsace and Lorraine out of his control.

**Charles
the Bold of
Burgundy**

The next duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold (1467-1477), was the most ambitious and the most colorful of the line, and his court in Flanders was the most luxurious in Europe. In 1473 he added Lorraine and much of Alsace to his domains, and he presently conceived the idea of becoming Holy Roman Emperor. He therefore

negotiated a treaty with the emperor (Frederick III) by which the emperor's son, Maximilian, was to marry Charles's only daughter, Mary, and the duke himself was to be named Frederick's heir as emperor (1476). Before the treaty could be signed, however, Charles was killed in a battle with the Swiss (1477). Maximilian married Mary, nevertheless, and their grandson surpassed even his great-grandfather's ambition. He ruled not only the Netherlands, Franche-Comté, and the Hapsburg lands, but Spain and her empire as well. He also became Holy Roman Emperor as Charles V (1519-1556; see page 734).

Charles the Bold's most persistent and most successful adversary was Louis XI, king of France (1461-1483). As a young man, Louis, having quarreled with his father, went to live on his personal estates. When his father tried to capture him, Louis fled to Philip (the father of Charles the Bold) in Burgundy. Charles and Louis quarreled soon after Louis became king, however, and it was Louis who upset the Burgundian's most cherished plans. Louis's cash payments dissuaded Frederick from signing the famous treaty, and he provoked the fatal war with the Swiss. When Charles died (1477), Louis annexed the duchy to the royal domain, occupied Franche-Comté, and restored Alsace and Lorraine to their former rulers. Mary of Burgundy married Maximilian, but she ruled little more than the Netherlands.

**Louis XI
of France**

Louis then rounded out French territory in other directions, partly by intrigue and partly by luck. He regained Artois, and when the Duke of Anjou died without heir (1481), Louis was relieved of the last of his powerful and semi-independent vassals and annexed the duke's territories to the royal domain. Brittany was added a few years later (1491), when Louis's son married the heiress to that province, but Flanders was lost forever. Louis was equally successful in promoting the growth of royal power, and when he died in 1483, he bequeathed to his son a strong and united kingdom. Charles VIII (1483-1498) then inaugurated a new period in French history by invading Italy (see page 651).

**France
united**

England and Spain

The course of political development in England and Spain in the fifteenth century resembled that in France. In each of these countries the kings strove to create strong central governments, and in each

**Parliamen-
tary gains
in England**

they were opposed by great lords who used the word "liberty" as a euphemism for "feudal anarchy." At first the barons were rather successful in England. They deposed and murdered Edward II (1307-1327), and, as parliament alone had the right to levy new taxes, they profited greatly from the financial difficulties of Edward III (1327-1377). During a lull in the war, Edward's grandson and heir, Richard II (1377-1399), attempted to strengthen royal power in England. The barons opposed this move strenuously, and at last parliament dethroned Richard and replaced him with his cousin, Henry IV. Parliament thereby won its greatest victory to date.

**Wars of
the Roses**

The next three English kings (Henry IV [1399-1413], Henry V [1413-1422], and Henry VI [1422-1461]) owe their present reputation largely to Shakespeare's plays about them. Being descended from John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster (1340-1399), an extremely able man who was a younger son of Edward III, they are known as the Lancastrian line. No one of these kings was a strong ruler (though Henry V's armies won famous victories in France); and Henry VI verged on feeble-mindedness, perhaps an inheritance from his maternal grandfather, the insane French king, Charles VI. The lords and parliament therefore continued to govern England. They fell to quarreling among themselves, however, with some ambitious leaders hoping to seize the throne while others merely hoped to control it. As soon as hostilities in France were concluded (1453), these baronial conflicts assumed the grandeur of a civil war, known to historians as the Wars of the Roses (1455-1485) because rival factions supposedly took the red and the white rose as their symbols. The two principal contestants were the families of Lancaster and York—the latter being descended from Edmund, duke of York (1341-1402), another son of Edward III—but the wars were more than a mere family feud.

**Yorkists
and Henry
Tudor**

Many sweeping changes had come over England during the long war with France. At the beginning of that conflict, England had been largely an agricultural and wool-producing country, with the wool being sent to Flanders to be made into cloth. During the war many Flemish weavers fled to England, where they set up their looms and began to weave. Other men launched other industries, trade grew, cities sprang up, and a powerful capitalist class arose. The capitalists were highly discontented with the Lancastrians, for the prevailing feudal anarchy interfered with trade, and royal taxation annoyed

them greatly. They therefore gave their support to the Yorkists, and after the death of Henry VI (1461) three Yorkist kings ruled in succession: Edward IV (1461-1483), Edward V (1483), and Richard III (1483-1485). Edward IV restored peace, curtailed the powers of parliament, and financed his government largely by confiscating the estates of Lancastrians—whom he called rebels. The nobility had by this time been decimated by the wars, and the confiscations completed their ruin. In the long run, however, the Yorkists were no more successful than the Lancastrians. Richard III was scarcely the monster pictured by Shakespeare, but he was a usurper whose critics accused him of tyranny, and he could not preserve peace in England. The rich burghers therefore transferred their favor to Henry Tudor—he was a descendant of the Lancastrian John of Gaunt but had married a daughter of the Yorkist Edward IV—and after defeating Richard at Bosworth Field he became King Henry VII (1485-1509). He successfully united the two factions, and under his skillful leadership the “tyranny” of the Yorkists was gradually transformed into the “absolutism” of the Tudors.

The situation in Spain was rather different, but the outcome was much the same. Like Louis XI and the Tudors, the Spanish monarchs successfully set up a strong monarchy. Before 1250 the Christian kings had driven the Moslems from all Spain except the small kingdom of Granada at the south, but no sooner had this stage of the reconquest been reached than dynastic and civil wars began to distract the Iberian Peninsula. The Aragonese were actively extending their power into Sicily and southern Italy, but the Castilians merely fought against each other. Here, as elsewhere in Europe, the most unruly groups were the great nobles, whom the king could not control and who often aspired to controlling or even to replacing him. The *córtes* (parliament) therefore acquired great power. In Spain, as in England, feudal anarchy reached its height in the decade or two following 1450, but in 1469 Isabella, heiress to Castile, married Ferdinand of Aragon. After they had mounted their respective thrones (1474 and 1479), the two rulers followed a single policy, and domestic peace was gradually restored. The great triumph of the two sovereigns came in 1492 when, by capturing Granada, they drove the last Moslem power from Spain. During the festivities in honor of this victory, Isabella gave Columbus the ships with which he sailed to America, thereby turning Spain and Europe in a new direction.

*Feudal
anarchy
in Spain*

Central Europe

**Eastward
migration
from
Germany**

The situation in central Europe was more complicated. Tens of thousands of Germans, both knights and peasants, had been migrating eastward during the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, taking with them their families and all their possessions. From south Germany they advanced down the Danube to Austria, whence many pushed forward onto the Hungarian plain, settling there in countless communities where German is still spoken today. From north Germany they proceeded eastward along the Baltic coast through East Prussia to the Baltic States (Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia). As early as the thirteenth century a crusading order, known as the Teutonic Knights, had conquered much of this territory from the aboriginal Slavs, and German settlers followed in their wake. In consequence of this migration, leaders developed a military spirit, and followers became accustomed to a solidarity against non-Germans—especially Slavs—that each group still retained in the twentieth century.

**Hohenzal-
lerns and
Hapsburgs**

At first the Teutonic Knights were very successful, defeating the Slavs on every hand and converting them to Catholic Christianity. In 1410, however, the Poles inflicted a crushing defeat upon them at Tannenberg in East Prussia, and from that moment the order declined. Fifty years later the Poles conquered West Prussia, thereby regaining access to the Baltic Sea and separating the strongly Germanized East Prussia from the rest of Germany. This situation has caused trouble in eastern Europe even in our own day. Prominent in this eastward advance of the Germans were two famous families that were destined to play important parts in later German history. The Hohenzollerns had migrated to central Germany (Nuremberg) from their earlier home in Swabia during the twelfth century; in 1415 they became rulers of Brandenburg in the northwest (around Berlin); and they took over East Prussia in 1525. The rival family of the Hapsburgs, which originated in Aargau in Switzerland, played a somewhat analogous role in Austria and the southeast.

**National-
ism in
the east**

This Germanic advance served to stimulate nationalistic enthusiasm among the Catholic Slavs of Poland, Lithuania, and Bohemia, as well as among the Catholic Magyars of Hungary. Poles and Lithuanians then united (1386) to form a great kingdom extending from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and a few years later they defeated the Germans at Tannenberg (1410). Meantime Bohemia's nationalistic opposition to a German king, named by the Holy Roman Emperor, was

expressing itself in the religious heresy of John Huss (see page 621). Though Huss was burned at the stake in 1415—just five years after Tannenberg—civil war continued to devastate Bohemia for twenty years.

While German power was thus advancing eastward, the Empire was losing important territories in the west. After 1246 the Kingdom of Burgundy (or Arles) broke up into small, rather independent principalities, most of which were eventually absorbed by France (Dauphiné, 1349; Provence, 1481; but Savoy not until 1792). Two more fruitless attempts to establish imperial power in Italy (1310–1313 and 1327–1350) caused the emperors temporarily to lose interest in that peninsula. The most interesting case of imperial loss, however, was that of Switzerland.

*Imperial
losses*

Because of its control of the Alpine passes to Italy, Switzerland was of high strategic importance to the emperors. The three central cantons, which held the approaches to the all-important St. Gothard Pass, supposedly were part of the Hapsburg domain, but they had shown great restlessness even in the thirteenth century, and in 1291 they leagued together for mutual defense. They were presently joined by five neighboring cantons, and during the fifteenth century five others entered the confederation, which then controlled rather more than two-thirds of the present Switzerland. Imperial officials no longer exercised any authority in the country, but they would not formally recognize the independence of the Swiss republic until 1648. When Charles the Bold, of Burgundy, attempted to add Switzerland to his vast domain (1474–1477), the Swiss defended themselves with such skill and valor that they became famous throughout Europe as soldiers and lovers of liberty. For many years thereafter the supplying of mercenary troops to European kings remained a major Swiss industry, and to the present day the pope maintains a detachment of Swiss guards.

Switzerland

During these centuries the Holy Roman Empire was no longer a factor of prime importance in European or even in German history. The government had fallen into the hands of the numerous German princes, and in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Germans showed very little national patriotism. After the Great Interregnum of 1254–1273, during which there really was no emperor for twenty years (see page 483), Rudolph I (1273–1291) became the first Hapsburg emperor and was eventually succeeded by his son, Albert I (1298–1308); but during the next century and a quarter the office

*Power of
the German
princes*

passed from one German family to another, with Luxembourgs enjoying it more than half of that time. In 1438, however, Albert II of Hapsburg secured the honor. In the next year he was succeeded by his distant cousin, Frederick III (1440-1493) who, during his long reign, made the position of his family so secure that his descendants continued to rule until the abolition of the Empire in 1806.

**Debility
of the
Empire**

Many things had happened in Germany during the fourteenth century. The great migrations eastward were carrying German peoples and German culture far beyond the confines of the Empire. Trade was prospering between Italy and the north, and German cities—among them Augsburg, Frankfort, and Cologne—were becoming rich and powerful. The German princes grew more independent than ever. Being an utter anachronism, the Empire lost most of its power, but it continued to function after a fashion. At last the "Golden Bull" was issued (1356), which delegated the choice of the emperor to seven important princes, or "electors." Three of them were ecclesiastics—the bishops of Mainz, Trier, and Cologne—and four were lay princes—the rulers of Saxony, Brandenburg, Bohemia, and the Palatinate of the Rhine. These seven electors were virtually sovereign rulers in their respective territories, and the Empire had become a weak and apparently superfluous affair.

**Emperor
Freder-
ick III**

When Frederick III became emperor, therefore, he faced the same great problems that disturbed the kings of western Europe. The princes were determined to perpetuate the prevailing feudal anarchy in order to preserve their personal liberty. But Frederick was merely one of the princes, more interested in his Hapsburg estates (which stretched here and there across southern Germany, from Alsace to the Hungarian frontier) than he was in the shadowy Empire. Moreover, he constantly had to defend these territories from outside attack—from Burgundians and French on the west, from Magyars and Bohemian nationalists on the east, and eventually from Turks on the southeast.

**National-
ism in
Germany**

Nevertheless, there were many persons who wished to transform the Empire into a German national state resembling those in western Europe. German burghers, like their colleagues in the west, resented feudal anarchy and the arbitrary taxation imposed by the princes. Many princes were equally anxious to see Germany become a national state—provided, of course, that they could have a large share in ruling it. Popular enthusiasm for unity is shown by the appearance, at this time, of the famous legend that Frederick Barbarossa had not died

but would soon return to create a great Germany (see page 480). Scholars were equally excited over the recent discovery of Tacitus's *Germania* (see page 220), which was considered a tribute to the nation.

Frederick was so preoccupied with his wars, especially in the east, that he had neither the time nor the strength to create a centralized Germany. His failure to do so was primarily due, however, to a very different cause. Frederick always was first and foremost a Hapsburg, concerned with his family and his ancestral estates rather than with Germany. He romantically foresaw a great future for this family, mystically expressed in the letters *A.E.I.O.U.*, which were made to prophesy that Austria would some day rule the world—*Austriac est imperare orbe universo*, or in German, *Alles Erdreich ist Oesterreich unterthan*. The most important achievement of his life was the marriage of his son and heir, Maximilian, to Margaret of Burgundy, and it too was designed to advance the Hapsburg family rather than Germany. He had no desire to create a national state in Germany, for he was still dreaming of a world state for the Hapsburg dynasty.

**Hapsburg
family
policy**

THE PAPACY AND THE CHURCH

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the church was changing as rapidly as were the national states and the Empire. When Boniface VIII (1294–1303), the last of the great medieval statesman-popes, issued the famous bull *Unam sanctam* in 1302, he made his last extreme statement of the papal prerogative. This bull was part of a long quarrel with the French king, Philip IV, who then cut controversy short by dispatching a trusted agent, Guillaume de Nogaret, to Rome with orders to bring Boniface to France for trial before a church council on charges of heresy and moral turpitude. Nogaret found the pope at a country estate near Anagni, a village not far from Rome. Here he browbeat the old man for three days, until an uprising of the villagers caused him to withdraw. When Boniface died, only a few days later, it was commonly reported that he had died of chagrin.

**The end of
Boniface
VIII**

Boniface's successor ruled for only a few months, after which the cardinals did not select a new pope for almost a year. Their choice finally fell upon the archbishop of Bordeaux, who became Clement V (1305–1314). This French pope felt no great desire to go to Rome, partly because he liked France, partly because the incessant brawls of family factions made Rome unsafe, and partly because Philip IV, then preparing to plunder the Knights Templar, wished to have the pope

**The church's
"Baby-
lanian
captivity"**

under his close supervision and control. Clement obliged Philip in nearly every particular. He abolished the Templars, absolved Nogaret from whatever guilt he might have incurred on "the terrible day of Anagni," filled the College of Cardinals with Frenchmen, and though he successfully resisted Philip's efforts to have Boniface declared a heretic, he canonized Pope Celestine V, thereby insulting the memory of Boniface anew. (St. Celestine had been a pious and austere Benedictine monk, rather in sympathy with the Spiritual Franciscans, whom Boniface had forced to resign after five months as pope [1294]; Boniface then became pope himself.) Clement's six successors all were Frenchmen who stayed in France, residing in a famous palace at Avignon on the Rhone. This period of papal residence in France later came to be called "the Babylonian Captivity of the Church" (1305-1378).

**The popes
at Avignon
(1305-
1378)**

Perhaps the word "captivity" is too strong. Philip dominated Clement, to be sure, but Clement's successors were relatively free men. Several were very able men, and during the Avignon period they strengthened the papacy with many reforms similar to those adopted by the kings who were then achieving absolute power. In the first place, they centralized authority in their own hands by gradually taking over the appointment of bishops and abbots. Italian bankers helped put papal finance on a more businesslike basis, while the popes themselves discovered and exploited countless new sources of revenue. The new taxes caused loud complaints, and their victims often charged that they were necessary only because of the luxurious lives of popes, cardinals, and bishops. The charge was quite unjust, however, for while part of the new revenue went to the enlarged papal bureaucracy, more of it went to the wars waged by the popes to maintain their political power in Italy. In some years the pope's armies consumed two-thirds of his income.

**Quarrels
of pope
and
emperor**

The second of the Avignon popes, John XXII (1316-1334), spent much of his reign quarreling with the emperor, Louis IV the Bavarian (1314-1347), who invaded Italy (1327-1330) and for several years maintained a rival pope at Rome. This controversy took on especial importance because of the propaganda war that accompanied it. John issued extreme statements in the style of Boniface VIII, and Louis was supported by such powerful controversialists as William of Ockham and Marsiglio of Padua. Ockham was the leading scholastic philosopher of his day, and Marsiglio's tract *Defensor Pacis* ("Defender of the Peace," 1324) contained, among other things, the most devastating

attack yet made upon papal claims. Louis also befriended the Spiritual Franciscans, not because he shared their love of apostolic poverty, but because they habitually used unrestrained language in criticizing the pope.

Further troubles soon befell the papacy, for when the Hundred Years' War broke out the English loudly charged that the pope was merely a pawn of the French king—a charge to which the pope added color by his large loans to Philip of France. Edward therefore stopped paying the tribute, known as "Peter's Pence," which England had sent to the pope regularly ever since King John became a vassal of Innocent III (1213). A few years later Edward inaugurated a series of antipapal measures with the Statute of Provisors (1351), which excluded from England all officials appointed by the pope, and the Statute of Praemunire (1353), which prohibited all appeals to papal courts.

**Antipapal
measures
of the
English**

Men everywhere criticized the continued residence of the popes at Avignon, their oppressive taxation, and their unprecedented interference in the affairs of local churches, but nowhere was dissatisfaction greater than in Italy. Here a woman later known as St. Catherine of Siena (1347–1380) took leadership in demanding that the pope return to Peter's see at Rome. Moreover, Avignon became a much less attractive place in which to live after the Treaty of Brétigny (1360), when "free companies" of discharged soldiers ran amuck over the whole Rhone Valley. To prevent armed attack upon Avignon itself, Urban V (1362–1370) was forced to supplement the excommunication of these brigands with heavy payments of tribute to them. In 1367 he and his French cardinals moved to Rome, where they found life so unpleasant that they returned to Avignon (1370). Agitation for a pope at Rome continued, however, and in 1378 Gregory XI (1370–1378) visited the city. He too was planning a return to Avignon when death overtook him. As the Roman mob loudly demanded an Italian pope, the cardinals elected a Neapolitan, Urban VI. The "Babylonian captivity" was thus terminated, but an even greater calamity befell the unhappy church almost at once.

**End of the
Captivity**

The Great Schism and the Councils

As Urban VI was a great disappointment to the French cardinals, they soon decided that, since they had voted under threats of mob violence, their action in electing him was null and void. At a second

**The Great
Schism**

conclave they chose a Frenchman, Clement VII, who led them back to Avignon. Each pope then created his own College of Cardinals, which chose his successor when the time came, and all Europe was edified during the next thirty-nine years by the spectacle of two (or even three) popes mutually reviling and recriminating each other.¹ Each pope was supported by countless propagandists, diplomats, lawyers, scholars, and saintly persons, but when secular princes had to decide which pope to recognize, they were guided principally by their political interests. The kings of France and Scotland, the various Spanish monarchs, and the rulers of Naples and Sicily accepted the Avignon popes; the emperor, the kings of England and Portugal, the duke of Burgundy, and most of the German princes supported the Roman line; and the city-states of northern Italy were divided, though popular opinion usually supported the Italian popes.

*Desire for
a church
council*

This state of affairs of course brought great confusion to the minds of pious Christians, and anxious persons sought ways of ending the scandal. The most popular proposal was that a general (or ecumenical, "world-wide") church council should depose both popes and put a new one in their place. There was nothing new in the idea of summoning such a council, for fifteen ecumenical councils had already been held, including three in the thirteenth century (1215, 1245, 1274) and one in the fourteenth (1311). For many years, moreover, persons dissatisfied with the growing power of the popes had been declaring that supreme authority in Christendom lay in a general council rather than with the pope. The views of such persons closely paralleled those of contemporary statesmen who urged parliamentary government as a check on royal absolutism. Soon after the schism broke out, two French theologians set forth the conciliar theory at length, but as their king supported the pope at Avignon, nothing came of their proposal at the time. The growing power of the Burgundian faction in French politics caused the government to forsake the Avignon pope, however, and cardinals of both factions then united in summoning a general council to end the schism.

¹ The popes of this period were:

<i>Roman Line</i>	<i>Avignon Line</i>	<i>Conciliar Line</i>
Urban VI, 1378-1389	Clement VII, 1378-1394	
Boniface IX, 1389-1404	Benedict XIII, 1394-1417	
Innocent VII, 1404-1406		Alexander V, 1409-1410
Gregory XII, 1406-1415		John XXIII, 1410-1415

Most Catholic scholars today accept the Roman as the true line, but the Church has not spoken officially on the matter.

About five hundred bishops and abbots, or their representatives, assembled at Pisa in the spring of 1409. After vainly summoning both popes (Gregory XII and Benedict XIII) to appear before it for trial, the council declared them heretics and deposed them both. The cardinals then elected a new pope, Alexander V. As neither of the old popes recognized the council, or accepted its decisions, the net result of its labor was that Latin Christendom was torn asunder thereafter by three popes instead of two. Moreover, Alexander V died within a few months, and at a new conclave his cardinals elected John XXIII, who, being a retired pirate, was scarcely the man for moral and spiritual leadership. Scandal throughout Europe rose to new heights. Shortly thereafter a certain Sigismund, of the Luxembourg family (1410-1437), became Holy Roman Emperor. Being sincerely concerned about the shocking state of the church, he forced John to summon a council which would heal the schism, suppress various heresies, and effect much-needed reforms of the church "in head and members."

**The Council
of Pisa
(1409)**

The new council sat at Constance, in Switzerland, from November, 1414, until April, 1418. Soon after it convened, hostilities broke out anew between France and England, with Agincourt fought about a year later. Relations between English and French churchmen were severely strained thereafter, but the council continued in session, and eventually it united the Western Church under one pope. John XXIII attended its opening sessions, hoping that the assembled churchmen would ratify his election, but when he found that they had no intention of doing so, he attempted flight. Captured by Sigismund and deposed by the council (May, 1415), he accepted his fate gracefully. Next, the Roman pope, Gregory XII, was prevailed upon to resign (July, 1415), but the pope at Avignon, Benedict XIII, proved more obdurate. Sigismund went to France, where he wasted nearly a year trying to persuade the obstinate old man to abdicate. Though the council finally deposed him (July, 1417), Benedict continued to call himself pope until he died in 1423. Meantime the cardinals and representatives of the council had elected Martin V (1417-1431), who returned to Rome as the sole pope recognized by any appreciable body of Catholics. The Great Schism was thus healed.

**The Council
of
Constance
(1414-
1418)**

The Council of Constance accomplished virtually nothing in the way of reforming abuses. Its significance lies rather in the expression it gave to the conciliar idea. Many of its members hoped to substitute parliamentary church government for papal absolutism. At an early

**Conciliar
theory**

session they passed a resolution asserting that a general council, holding its powers directly from God, was superior to the pope, and that anyone, even a pope, who refused obedience thereby became a heretic. To prevent being outvoted by the Italians, who were present in large numbers, the northern members insisted that the council be organized in four (later five) "nations," each with one vote to be determined by a majority of that nation's members. Behind this arrangement lay the larger idea that the church in each country should be a largely autonomous unit, suffering little or no interference from the pope. The French spoke much of the "Gallican liberties" of their church, and others expressed analogous ideas regarding their national churches. They also declared that general church councils, somewhat resembling the assemblies of a religious League of Nations, should meet at regular intervals to decide questions concerning the whole church. Presumably the pope would lend his grace and dignity to the sessions of this council as its presiding officer, but he would be little more than a figurehead.

**The Council
of Basel
(1431–
1449)**

Before dissolving, the council decreed that another council should be held within five years, a second seven years later, and others every ten years thereafter. In due time a council met at Pavia (1423), spoke vaguely of church reform, and accomplished nothing. The Council of Basel, which assembled in 1431, was more important. As at Constance, its members struggled against papal absolutism, but they were opposed by the aggressive Pope Eugenius IV (1431–1447). The council could not enforce decrees favoring the conciliar program and local liberty at the expense of the papacy, and the friends of papal absolutism successfully played off nationalities and factions against each other. After the council had been in quarrelsome session for several years, Eugenius dissolved it (1437) and summoned another to meet at Ferrara in 1438. His partisans migrated to the new council, but the advocates of conciliar government remained at Basel. When they declared the pope deposed as a heretic (1439), Eugenius disregarded their action, and the antipope with whom they replaced him found little support. The council continued in session until 1449, but when its members finally separated, the conciliar movement collapsed.

**Failure
of the
councils**

There were many reasons for the failure of the conciliar leaders, who included some of the most intelligent and devout men in Europe. These leaders had counted on the support of secular princes, who at

first had favored reducing the pope by means of the conciliar movement. The princes were just then busily engaged in establishing their own absolutism over parliaments, however, and they found it hard to sympathize whole-heartedly with the aspirations of parliamentary leaders in the church. Eugenius presently discovered that these princes were quite reasonable, and made separate treaties (concordats) with several of them. Meantime, the French bishops had secured the "Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges" (1438), which declared a council superior to the pope, suppressed annates and various other payments to Rome, and guaranteed the "Gallican liberties" of the French church. The bishops soon learned, however, that these "Gallican liberties" merely meant that thereafter they were to be dominated by the nearby king rather than by the faraway pope. And finally, during the period of controversy, papal writers had developed elaborate theories presenting papal absolutism as the sole guardian against heresy and schism, and the antipope at Basel lent color to their contentions. In church as in state, parliamentary government was going into eclipse.

At the same time, Eugenius staged a theatrical coup by momentarily reuniting the Latin and Greek churches, after four centuries of schism. The Byzantine emperor, terrified at the recent progress of the Turks (see page 342), had called upon the West for aid, and Eugenius suggested that such aid might be forthcoming if the Greek Church accepted papal supremacy. After long negotiations, a treaty providing for formal reunion was concluded at Florence in 1439. Popular indignation in the East was so great, however, that reunion never was effected. Crowds in Constantinople paraded the streets, shouting, "Better the Turkish infidel than the Roman heretic"; the Byzantine emperor, who had knelt to kiss the pope's foot at Florence, dared not publish the treaty in Constantinople; and its chief negotiator, Basilios Bessarion (c. 1395-1472), deemed it wise to remain in Italy as a cardinal of the Roman Church. At this point Eugenius forgot his suggestion of aid to Byzantium, and a few years later Constantinople fell to the Turks (1453). Nevertheless, a few Greeks and Slavs accepted the treaty of 1439, and their successors are now called "Uniates." They accept papal supremacy but retain their old ritual, their married clergy, and a few practices distinguishing them from Roman Catholics. The pope recognizes them as Catholics.

**Momentary
reunion
with the
Eastern
Church**

*Theological Disputes***Criticism
of church
doctrines**

While the Babylonian Captivity and the Great Schism were thus bringing the medieval church into confusion and popular disrespect, other forces were sapping its intellectual foundations, making the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as unfortunate for the church intellectually as they were politically. Even in the thirteenth century various Franciscan friars, notably Robert Grosseteste and Roger Bacon, had attacked the theology of their Dominican rival, St. Thomas Aquinas. In the fourteenth century, criticism was carried much farther by two English Franciscans, Duns Scotus (c. 1265-1308) and his pupil and rival William of Ockham (c. 1280-1349).

**Nominal-
ism**

These two men, whose philosophy is called "nominalism," insisted that knowledge can be derived only from observation and experience. Some of their followers therefore multiplied their observations of nature, thus becoming scientists after a fashion, while others were led to declare that the truths of religion can be known only from divine revelation. Ockham's pupils even declared that it is impossible to "know" anything at all about God, thereby disturbing the serene assurance of Aquinas that there can be no real contradiction between reason and faith or between scientific knowledge and revealed religious truth. Duns Scotus was a man of subtle intellect and a master logician, but his pupils sometimes became so entangled in his intricate reasonings that they lost all sense of reality. The English language preserves his name in our word "dunce," which may have fitted some of his followers but which certainly was not applicable to Scotus himself. Ockham, on the other hand, spent his later years in political controversy, sympathizing with the Spiritual Franciscans and writing tracts against the temporal power of the pope (see page 614).

**John
Wycliffe**

John Wycliffe (c. 1320-1384) was an English theologian and a popular professor at Oxford for many years, quite unsuspected of heresy until after he accompanied a mission to negotiate with papal diplomats at Bruges (Belgium) in 1374. Like Ockham, he began speaking and writing against the temporal power of the pope, which presently led him to attack the position and powers of the clergy in general. He was tried for heresy at London in 1377, but he had friends among the higher clergy and he enjoyed the support of the most powerful man in England, John of Gaunt. The trial was broken up by mob violence and the court reached no decision. Thereafter

Wycliffe's criticisms of the church took more radical forms. His denial of the two fundamental Catholic doctrines of transubstantiation and penance endangered clerical power over the people since the theologians taught that only priests could perform the miracle of the Mass or absolve sinners—both of which sacraments were essential to salvation. Wycliffe further weakened the organized church by his teaching that all necessary religious truth can be learned from the Bible, and that any Christian is competent to interpret this book for himself. He and others therefore translated the Bible from Latin into English, in order that all Englishmen might read it. When Wycliffe was summoned to Rome for another trial in 1383, he refused to go, and a year later he died in peace.

Wycliffe's preaching aroused wide enthusiasm in England and soon the country was swarming with preachers, called Lollards, who carried his ideas to the common people. Unfortunately the economic changes that accompanied the collapse of feudalism were just then causing widespread disturbances among the peasants and even led to open rebellion in 1381 (see page 625). Unrest continued among the lower classes after the revolt had been suppressed, and well-to-do persons often attributed the commotion to the preaching of the Lollards. Probably they were right, at least in part. At any rate, parliament passed the famous statute *De Heretico Comburendo* ("On Burning Heretics," 1401), which for the first time authorized this barbarous measure in England. Several years later the Council of Constance formally declared Wycliffe a heretic and ordered his body dug up and burned (1415). This gruesome decree was not carried out until 1428.

Meantime Wycliffe's ideas were being disseminated in distant Bohemia. The wife of Richard II (1377-1399) had been a Bohemian princess, and on her journey to England she was accompanied by several Czech prelates. These men carried Wycliffe's ideas back to Bohemia, where they were adopted, modified slightly, and expanded by a popular preacher at Prague, John Huss (1369-1415). Huss combined his heretical theology with a nationalistic campaign against the Germans in Bohemia, and his preaching met with such success that the Emperor Sigismund became seriously alarmed. He laid the matter before the Council of Constance, and Huss was declared a heretic. Though the Czech reformer had come to Constance with a safe-conduct signed by the emperor himself, he was burned at the stake (July 6, 1415). It was reported that he met his fate with

**The
Lollards**

John Huss

exceptional fortitude and serenity. About a year later his principal follower, Jerome of Prague, was likewise burned, but the Hussite heresy continued to rage in Bohemia for many a year, with theological and nationalistic enthusiasms inextricably entwined. Religious warfare continued for twenty years, and there were Hussite heretics in Bohemia two centuries later.

*Dissatis-
faction
with the
church*

Other less spectacular events were even more effectively hastening the decline of the medieval church. Though the Spiritual Franciscans had long since been declared heretics, and several of their leaders had been burned at the stake, they continued throughout the fourteenth century to advocate apostolic poverty for the clergy, and they often referred to the Roman Church as the "Synagogue of Satan." Other groups hysterically preached the impending end of the world, stirring up great confusion thereby. Still others, known as "Flagellants," went about beating themselves and each other with whips as punishment for their sins—being no longer satisfied with the church's indulgences and the sacrament of penance. But at the same time other persons, deeply religious and not at all eccentric, were quietly developing new forms of piety and devotion, which eventually led to the great religious revival that swept over Europe during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

36. THE EARLY RENAISSANCE

THE fourteenth and fifteenth centuries also witnessed economic changes as far-reaching as those then overwhelming the feudal church and state. The population of western Europe had been rising steadily for two hundred years, but after 1300 its rate of increase began to fall off. Not much new land was available for agriculture, and not many new towns were founded. Towns already in existence may have grown slightly, but they could not increase greatly in size until improved transport made possible greater supplies of food. It therefore seems unlikely that Europe's population was much augmented during the first half of the fourteenth century.

The battle casualties of the Hundred Years' War were not a serious loss to the total population, but its indirect casualties were a grave matter for France, which was then the most populous country of Europe. Soon thereafter a more terrible calamity befell Europe. The "Black Death" (probably bubonic plague) swept over the Continent, striking first in the years 1347-1349 and returning twice during the 1360's. The accounts of panic-stricken contemporaries are much exaggerated, and there are no reliable statistics, but modern writers have plausibly estimated deaths as high as a quarter of the entire population of Europe. In some areas, especially the cities, the proportion was much higher. Of course such losses in man power had profound effects upon economic life, and not for a full generation did Europe recover from this blow. By 1400, however, losses had been made good, and after the middle of the fifteenth century a vigorous and increasing population was again forcing economic expansion.

The economic position of the old nobility changed during these two centuries. A few nobles grew richer, and by adding field to field, manor to manor, usually through marriage, they became the lords of

*Stationary
population*

*Black
Death*

*Impover-
ished
nobility*

tremendous estates. Such lucky persons lived in extravagant style, erected magnificent castles, and kept great retinues of liveried retainers. Most of the old nobility, however, were worse off than before. When the use of coined money became common in the twelfth century, both lords and peasants found it profitable for the latter to make cash payments in lieu of rendering feudal services: the peasants then had all their time free for work in their own fields, and the lords used part of the money to hire laborers to till the demesne lands. Unfortunately for the lords, however, the amount of the cash payment remained the same, year after year, though prices in general were rising steadily. The lords therefore received less real return from their lands than before, and the fourteenth century found many of them on the verge of bankruptcy. Looting during the war completed the ruin of countless French nobles. Some were forced to sell part of their land to richer neighbors; others found fat positions in the church for their younger sons; still others turned to the king's service for similar relief; and many endeavored to keep solvent by reviving old feudal dues and gouging every possible penny from their serfs.

Discon-
tented
peasants

The peasants, on the other hand, had enjoyed a high degree of prosperity during the thirteenth century. While the real value of the rents they paid was declining, the rapid growth of the urban population kept up the prices of agricultural produce. Before 1300, however, the economic position of the serfs had begun to deteriorate. New land was less easily acquired than formerly, and children brought more mouths to feed. Poverty-stricken lords began exacting higher feudal dues. When the Black Death decimated the countryside, and the lords could no longer find enough laborers willing to work at the old wages, they frantically turned to the government for aid. The English parliament (composed largely of landowners) passed a Statute of Laborers (1351) compelling men to work at the old pay, and strenuous though vain efforts were made to enforce the statute. The next twenty or thirty years were a period of great discontent among peasants and laborers, with widespread popular agitation against the nobility. English malcontents pointedly asked,

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman?

and similar sentiments reëchoed from the Continent. War added to the general discontent, and from time to time wild revolts broke out. As early as 1357-1358 there were peasant rebellions, called *jacqueries*,

in central France (see page 605), and during the next several years many similar uprisings occurred elsewhere. The most formidable of these revolts, and the one about which we are best informed, occurred in England in 1381, under the leadership of a certain Wat Tyler. On this occasion, the rioters demanded especially the abolition of feudal dues and land rents, and when possible they destroyed the parchments on which these dues were recorded.

The peasant revolts were beaten down with great cruelty, but in the end economic forces proved even stronger than royal troops. Serfdom and feudalism gradually disappeared, and the abler peasants came to form a new social class, called "yeomen." Yeomen held their farms in freehold, and though they worked in the fields themselves, they often were able to hire poorer men to help them. These independent yeomen provided the bowmen who defeated French knights at Crécy and Agincourt, and for the next two or three centuries they formed the backbone of rural England.

**Abler serfs
become
yeomen**

Industry and Capitalism

Artisans in the towns, on the other hand, were worse off in the fourteenth century than they had been in the thirteenth. There was little progress in technology now, though the preceding century had brought forth many fundamental inventions. The trouble was not that men had lost their inventiveness, but that the elaborate and thoroughly standardized guild rules made innovation difficult or impossible. Industry therefore became stagnant. At the same time the masters found new ways to exploit apprentices and journeymen. As most journeymen no longer hoped to become masters themselves, class feeling arose between them and the masters, strikes occurred with increasing frequency, and rioting often followed. While Wat Tyler was leading his peasants to rebellion in England (1381), serious revolts of workmen broke out in Florence, Paris, and several Flemish cities. Of course the net result of it all was that everyone lost heavily, and industry suffered a decided setback.

**Stagnation
of industry**

In the textile industry Flemish masters presently discovered that they could avoid trouble with their organized journeymen by hiring peasants to spin and weave the wool in their own homes, for these scattered workers could not easily be organized. Thus developed a "cottage industry," under which masters bought wool, distributed it to peasants in their villages, and later collected and sold the cloth. As

**Cottage
industry**

these workers spent only a part of their time at weaving and the rest at farming, they could subsist on low wages and they caused their employers little trouble. When cottage industry brought suffering to urban journeymen, rebellions became more embittered. Moreover, the cottage workers were not so skillful as the journeymen, and on the world market Flemish cloth no longer enjoyed the same high reputation as before. The result was that, after long periods during which the workers were afflicted with unemployment and rebellion, even their cities went into decline. In 1400 the cities of Flanders no longer were what they had been 150 years before.

**Capitalistic
enterprise**

The rise of cottage industry also gave evidence of another fundamental change that was taking place in the European economic system. Under the new system, wool was bought in England, shipped to Flanders, distributed to dozens of workers in their cottages for spinning, weaving, fulling, and dyeing, and only then could the cloth be sold on the market. The men who directed all these operations were not really weavers at all but businessmen or capitalists. In the early days they may have worked up through the stages of apprentice and journeymen to become master weavers, but such training was quite superfluous. What they needed was skill at organizing and capital with which to buy wool and pay various workmen long before they received any money for the cloth. In the fourteenth century such men capitalized the textile industry, and in the fifteenth, capitalistic enterprise spread rapidly to other industries. Many industries (e.g., mining) could not advance beyond a very primitive stage without heavy investments of capital, and in the fifteenth century a number of inventions (e.g., printing or cannon casting) opened up new industries which promised great rewards to men willing to risk their capital.

**Falling
prices**

One other aspect of the economic situation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries requires our attention. These centuries were, in general, a period of falling prices. The only money then in use was the "hard" money—gold and silver minted into coins—which had again come into wide circulation in the thirteenth century. When there were enough coins to supply western Europe's needs, prices rose steadily and men prospered. Unfortunately, however, much gold was drained off to the East to pay for spices and other luxuries bought there by Europeans. (At this time the East would buy so few European wares that the oriental luxuries could not be paid for with exported goods.) Moreover, during the Hundred Years' War kings became dependent upon mercenaries, who had to be paid regularly. Kings therefore

hoarded gold and silver. Nevertheless, the volume of trade was increasing, and traders needed more coins. The precious metals therefore began to have an abnormally high value, or, to put it the other way around, a few coins would buy a great many commodities, or the money price of these commodities declined steadily.

Declining prices brought dismay to nearly everyone and are a partial explanation of the general pessimism that characterized the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. There was an eager search for gold—not because men had studied the laws of economics and thought that fresh supplies of the precious metals would reinvigorate Europe's declining economy, but merely because they knew that a little gold made a man very rich. In the late fifteenth century, when new mines were opened and Portuguese explorers began bringing gold home from Africa, conditions improved slightly, but the stringency was not really overcome until the next century, when Spaniards began importing heavily from Mexico and Peru.

**An eager
search for
gold**

Shifting Trade Centers

England made a slow start in industry. She was one of the two great wool-producing countries of Europe—rivaled at that time only by Spain—but in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries her spinners and weavers barely supplied her own market. Perhaps 80 percent of her wool went to Flanders. Presently, however, English statesmen began to remedy this state of affairs. Edward I (1272–1307) encouraged the textile industry in England by levying an export tax on every sack of wool leaving the country and permitting it to leave only through certain “staple” ports. His son forbade the importation of fine cloths from abroad and invited Flemish weavers to settle in England. Under Edward III (1327–1377) England began exporting large quantities of cloth to Italy and the Hanseatic cities. In the fifteenth century English cloth merchants were among the wealthiest men in the kingdom, and during the Wars of the Roses, as we have seen (page 608), they played an important part in the rise and fall of kings and dynasties.

**Industrial
progress
in England**

Flanders lost much of its wool supply because of these developments in England, and the Hundred Years' War was a further blow to her ailing economy. The crowning misfortune fell in the next century, however, when the mouth of the Scheldt River began to silt up, thus ruining the port of Bruges. From that day to this, the city has been known as “Bruges-la-Morte” (“Bruges the Dead”). It is still

**Decline of
Flanders
and the
Hansa**

visited by tourists because of its fine medieval buildings, but it no longer is a city of commercial importance. At about the same time began the decline of the Hanseatic League. During the fourteenth century the League had been virtually a north German state, made up of almost a hundred member cities, each of which was represented in a congress meeting at Lübeck. Its armed forces waged wars and drove out all interlopers from its private preserve. But in the fifteenth century the League began to go the way of all monopolies, and a hundred years later its great days were over.

**Commercial
prosperity
of Italy**

The great commercial cities of Italy, on the other hand, remained rich and prosperous throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Venice and Genoa continued their rivalry for the Levantine trade, sending argosies every year to the eastern ports of the Mediterranean, whence they brought back cargoes of spices, jewels, perfumes, dyes, and other luxury articles. Early in the fourteenth century (about 1317) Venice began sending her "Flanders fleet" through the Straits of Gibraltar and around Spain to England and the Flemish cities. The opening of this new route seriously disturbed the European balance of trade, giving Venice a great advantage over her Genoese rival in the northern markets. Genoa's overland route through central France was much more costly, and presently the disturbances accompanying the Hundred Years' War rendered it unsafe. The great fairs of eastern France, once so important in Europe's economic system, therefore fell into decay. On the other hand, Venetian supremacy encouraged trade across the eastern Alpine passes, to such south German cities as Augsburg, and down the Rhine to northern Germany and the cities of the Hanseatic League.

**Search for
new trade
routes**

This opening of new trade routes, and the consequent shifting of the economic balance of power, inspired men to seek still other possible fields for commercial expansion. The Genoese in particular, seeing themselves lagging behind Venice, began sending explorers into the Atlantic, but as they found nothing of immediate commercial value, the small islands they discovered were soon forgotten. The Spaniards, and more especially the Portuguese, having at last reconquered most of their peninsula from the Moslems, began thinking of foreign trade, but they were newcomers in the international field and were forced to find new markets and trade routes. Exploration was also encouraged by such factors as the great scarcity of gold, the old crusading spirit, missionary zeal, and even the beginning of a scientific curiosity about the world and its peoples. The fifteenth

century therefore saw the beginnings of the great burst of exploration that led to the epoch-making voyages of Christopher Columbus.

Back in the thirteenth century, while the Latin Kingdom established during the Fourth Crusade (see page 339) still held Constantinople for Venice, two Venetian brothers named Nicolo and Maffeo Polo had made adventurous trading expeditions across the Black Sea to the Crimea, then a part of the Tartar state known as the Golden Horde (see page 341). By ingratiating themselves with various caravan leaders, they made their way across Asia to Cathay (China), which was then ruled by the great Kublai Khan (see page 398). Kublai was much impressed by what his visitors told him of Europe. He therefore gave them a letter to the pope, requesting that missionaries be sent to Christianize his people. The Polo brothers returned to Italy by way of Acre in 1269, but not until two years later could they persuade the pope to listen to them. He then allotted them only two Dominican friars—who soon turned back. Nevertheless, the Polos reached China a second time, taking with them Nicolo's young son, the famous Marco Polo (1254–1324). This time they stayed in China almost twenty years, traveling extensively, and with Marco serving the khan on various missions. In 1295 they returned home by way of the Indian Ocean. Three years later Marco commanded a Venetian galley in a battle against the Genoese, was captured, and spent about a year in prison. During his captivity a fellow prisoner wrote down (in French) Marco's account of his travels in the East. This work became the most famous travel book of the late Middle Ages, turning the heads of countless readers with its stories of the romance and riches of the East. Unfortunately the successes of Tamerlane in the Near East (see page 341) rendered impossible the establishment of direct trade relations with China at that time, but a few other travelers managed to get through and return with further tales of oriental magnificence.

Then came the rediscovery by the Portuguese and Spaniards of islands in the Atlantic. The Azores, apparently unknown to the Greeks and Romans, had been visited by Carthaginian mariners, and they are mentioned by Arabic geographers in the twelfth century. The first European map showing them is one from Genoa dated 1375. The islands were then uninhabited, but they were rediscovered and settled by Portuguese colonists early in the fifteenth century (about 1431). Perhaps the Madeiras too had been visited by Genoese explorers in the fourteenth century, but the Portuguese rediscovered them in 1418–1419, and after 1430 they were colonized from Portugal. The

Marco Polo

**Portuguese
discoveries**

Canaries likewise were known to Moslem navigators and had been visited by a Genoese explorer in 1334. Early in the next century they were rediscovered by Castilians, and subsequently colonized by them, but only in 1480 were they definitely assigned to Castile by Portugal. These various discoveries, like the travels of Marco Polo, fired countless imaginations and caused men to dream of new markets, new trade routes, and new wealth outside the lands of Latin Christendom.

**Henry the
Navigator**

The most important of these dreamers was Prince Henry "the Navigator" of Portugal (1394-1460). Being a younger son of old King John, Henry never ruled his country and never was likely to. As a young man, he had played a distinguished part in the capture (1415) of Ceuta, a Moslem stronghold on the African coast opposite Gibraltar, and he spent his life thereafter planning and sending out exploring expeditions to spy out the African coast. He built a residence at Sagres, near Cape St. Vincent where the southwestern tip of Portugal reaches farthest into the Atlantic, and there he gathered about him a company of learned men—Christians, Moslems, Jews—who assembled all the information then available about land outside Europe. Two of his most important assistants were his brother Pedro, who brought him valuable Italian maps and a copy of Marco Polo's book, and Jafuda Cresques, a Jewish map maker from Majorca.

**African
coast
explored**

Henry was inspired in part by the old crusading spirit and the legends of Prester John—a mythical Christian king in Africa, said to be awaiting liberation from his Moslem captors—but he was also much interested in finding gold as well as cities with which he could trade. Beginning in the 1420's he sent one expedition after another south along the African coast, constantly pushing farther, until in 1445 one of his admirals rounded Cape Verde—the westernmost tip of Africa—while another reached Sierra Leone a year later, and still others discovered the Cape Verde Islands in 1457. They did not find Prester John, but they brought back gold and African slaves, and they prepared the way for the great explorers at the end of the century. The work of Henry the Navigator is also an excellent example of the new spirit of capitalism that was then springing up all over Europe, for he made great financial investments in the hope of ultimately reaping a still greater gain.

Banks and Bankers

**Bankers'
troubles**

During the thirteenth century Italian bankers (often called Lombards though most of them came from Siena or Florence) had thrown



their nets over most of western Europe, lending money and transacting business for popes, kings, aristocrats, and merchants. Naturally these Italians were unpopular with those who owed them money, and sometimes native bankers succeeded in having them expelled from the country, along with the Jews. But the services of the Lombards were so indispensable, and native financiers so unable to fill their places, that the kings soon allowed them to return. A more severe blow to the bankers was the declining economic prosperity of the fourteenth century. We know of at least eighteen important banks that failed in the first quarter of that century, the most famous of them being that of the powerful Buonsignori of Siena (1307). A still heavier blow fell a few years later when the two largest banking houses of

Florence, those of the Peruzzi and the Bardi, failed in 1343 and 1344 respectively. The former was ruined when the king of Naples repudiated his debts, the latter when Edward III of England followed suit.

**Jacques
Coeur**

The economic revival of the fifteenth century brought new families of financiers to the fore. The most spectacular of these new men in the first half of the century was Jacques Coeur (c. 1395–1456) of Bourges, a town in central France. As a young man he had gone on a trading expedition to the Near East, reaching Damascus, and on his return to France he settled in Montpellier. Within twenty years he became a serious rival of the Italians for the eastern Mediterranean



LORENZO DE' MEDICI. (Culver)

trade, regaining for France a position in the Levant which she had not enjoyed for two hundred years. Being by far the wealthiest man in France, he lived in a grand style, and his residence at Bourges is still admired as an architectural triumph. Charles VII appointed him to important offices, including that of master of the mint, and borrowed heavily from him to equip the armies that finally drove the English from France. But Coeur also lent money to nobles and courtiers, which was his undoing. When the king's mistress, Agnes Sorel (one of the famous beauties of history) died suddenly in 1450, various persons who owed Coeur money accused him of having poisoned her. As even his judges owed him money, Coeur was convicted, his property was confiscated, and he was imprisoned. In 1453



JACOB FUGGER. (Culver)

he managed to escape, entered the service of the pope, and died on the island of Chios in the Aegean (1456). Charles VII then returned to Coeur's sons what remained of his property, but by this time most of it had been dissipated among the nobles and expensive ladies at court.

**The
Fuggers**

Two other financiers of this period were more fortunate, and founded families that continued for several generations to exercise great power in the economic and political life of Europe. The founder of the Fugger family was a German peasant who had become a weaver and settled in Augsburg, where his son, Johannes (1348-1409), became a rich cloth merchant. This man's elder son was ruined when the Flemish town of Louvain repudiated a large debt, but his second son, Jacob (d. 1469), prospered in all his dealings. He was primarily a banker, but he was also interested in many com-

THE MEDICI

Giovanni de' Medici
1360-1429

Cosimo
1389-1464

Piero
1414-1469

Lorenzo
the Magnificent
1449-1492

Pietro
1471-1503

Catherine de Médicis
1519-1589
= Henry II of France

Giovanni
1475-1521
(Pope Leo X)

Giuliano
1453-1478

Giulia
1478-1534
(Pope Clement VII)

Lorenzo
1395-1440

xxxx

Marie de Médicis
1573-1642
= Henry IV of France

xxxx four generations skipped

mercerial and industrial undertakings. Jacob's son, Jacob Fugger "the Rich" (1459-1525), was the genius of the family. His business enterprises extended not only to Germany, Tirol, Hungary, and Spain but even to Mexico and India, and he was banker to Pope Leo X. We shall see that he played a large and generally successful part in the imperial and religious controversies of the early sixteenth century.

Another great banking family was that of the Medici in Florence. This family too was descended from a weaver whose son, Giovanni de' Medici (1360-1429), became a rich merchant. Giovanni's son, Cosimo (1389-1464), was a rich banker who virtually ruled Florence for thirty years, who was hailed as "father of his country," and who patronized scholars and artists. In Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo "the Magnificent" (1449-1492), the family reached its greatest glory. In later times its various branches included two popes, Leo X (1513-1521) and Clement VII (1523-1534), and two queens of France, Catherine de Médicis (1519-1589) and Marie de Médicis (1573-1642). With the Medici we enter the period of the Italian Renaissance.

*The
Medici*

NEW INTELLECTUAL INTERESTS

In the fourteenth century the intellectual leadership of Europe passed from France to Italy, and there it remained during the two hundred years of the Italian Renaissance. This period of Italian hegemony was characterized by remarkable works in literature and the fine arts, by a revival of interest in classical antiquity, and by the scholars whom we call "humanists." A hundred years ago historians were wont to rhapsodize over this wonderful "rebirth" of civilization after the long night of the "Dark Ages." Today such praise is no longer in order. We now know that the Middle Ages were not so dark as was once supposed, that the men of the Renaissance did not differ from their predecessors so widely as they fondly believed, and above all, that these men were not what we call "modern." Yet the leaders of Renaissance thought were quite unlike the Ockhamist scholastics of their own day. They may have been blind to the nobler aspects of medieval culture—such enthusiasts usually underestimate their immediate predecessors—but they were quite right in believing that their age was the dawn of a new period in world history. Before we examine their works, however, we must see something of the social and political background provided by the Italy in which they lived.

*The dawn
of a
new age*

**Cola
di Rienzi**

After the fall of the Hohenstaufen dynasty, southern Italy and Sicily were overrun by foreign adventurers, first French and later Spanish, who misgoverned the country sadly. In central Italy, the Babylonian captivity had left the Papal States without a strong ruler, and the great patrician families of Rome became more insolent and more riotous than ever. Reform was attempted by various persons, the most significant of whom was Cola di Rienzi (1313–1354). This ambitious but eccentric demagogue envisaged himself as a new Tiberius Gracchus (see page 180), who would curb the patricians, restore justice and order, and enable Rome to resume her rightful place as master of Italy and the world. After a popular rebellion in May, 1347, he had himself proclaimed “tribune,” but the patricians soon expelled him from the city. Still persuaded of his divine mission to reform the world, he went to beg aid of the emperor, and the emperor handed him over to the pope, who imprisoned him at Avignon. As unrest in Rome continued unabated, the pope eventually decided that the “tribune” might ward off worse evils. In August, 1354, therefore, he enabled Rienzi to seize power once more, but within two months the poor man—like the original Tiberius Gracchus—was killed in a riot. The pope then raised an army of mercenaries, and the city was forcibly pacified, though many years were to pass before the popes again ruled securely at Rome.

**City-states
and tyrants**

Meantime the city-states of Etruria and Lombardy had become economically prosperous. The quarrels of factions continued, however, and one after another these states fell into the hands of tyrants who repressed civil discord with a heavy hand. Venice and Genoa alone retained their traditional republican governments. Sometimes the tyrants were little better than successful gangsters, but sometimes they were bankers or businessmen who ruled by intrigue. At Milan the tyrants of the Visconti (1312–1447) and Sforza (1450–1500) families clearly belonged in the former category, but the Medici (1434–1494) controlled the government of Florence largely by their wealth and prestige.

**Tyrants
and popes
as patrons
of the arts**

These various rulers, whether tyrants or not, sought renown and popular favor by manifesting an enthusiasm for literature and the arts. They spent money lavishly to embellish their cities with fine buildings and works of art, and they sought to perpetuate their names and to enliven their courts by retaining wits, literary men, and scholars in residence. The patronage of the Medici, who were sincere lovers of art and learning, was an important factor in making

Florence the intellectual and artistic capital of Italy. The Venetian republic encouraged artists, and its university at Padua became one of the most famous in Europe. Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455), a scholar formerly in the employ of Cosimo de' Medici, was active in the support of learning and art, and for sixty years his successors followed in his footsteps, attracting artists and scholars from all parts of Italy, founding the famous Vatican library, and crowning their achievements with the erection of the great church known as St. Peter's. Even the brutal and ignorant tyrants of Milan deemed it expedient to feign an interest in cultural matters. Under the stimulus of these patrons, art and learning blossomed anew in Italy.

Literature

The first great figure of the Italian Renaissance was Francesco Petrarch (1304–1374), whose voluminous writings set forth many ideas characteristic of the new age. As his Florentine father had been exiled along with Dante (1302), Francesco was born at nearby Arezzo. After studying law at Montpellier and Bologna, and being ordained a priest, he entered the service of the pope at Avignon, whom he represented on several diplomatic missions. Later he performed similar services for other patrons, notably the Visconti of Milan. His earliest published writings—Italian love lyrics addressed to a certain Laura, the French wife of a merchant in Avignon—were followed with longer and more ambitious poems in Latin or Italian. With impressive ceremony he was crowned poet laureate at Rome (1341). Like Cola di Rienzi, whom he much admired, Petrarch was enthusiastic about the ancient glories of Rome, and he wished to see a restored Italy lead the world culturally as well as politically.

Though a medieval man in many ways, Petrarch was a man of worldly ambition, greatly enamored of glory. He had little sympathy with medieval otherworldliness, and he criticized the scholastic philosophy of the Middle Ages, about which he knew very little. In its place he hoped to substitute a new, but Christian, philosophy deduced from the writings of Cicero and Seneca. His enthusiasm for ancient Rome led him to praise her literature extravagantly and to conduct a diligent search for old manuscripts that might contain lost masterpieces by ancient authors. This contagious enthusiasm for classical studies was Petrarch's great contribution to cultural history. He coined the word "humanist" to describe persons like himself who

**Francesco
Petrarch**

**The first
modern
scholar**

preferred the "humane" literature of the ancients to the "sacred" literature of the church and the Middle Ages. In spite of all his talk about his own greatness, however, Petrarch knew less about the Latin classics than did John of Salisbury and others among the scholastics whom he pilloried so remorselessly for their alleged ignorance, and even his highly polished sonnets to Laura are read but rarely today.

**Giovanni
Boccaccio**

A more enduring writer of the period was Petrarch's friend, Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375). The son of a Florentine merchant, Boccaccio traveled widely in Italy, and even in France, and he passed several happy years at Naples, but he never felt at home in Florence. He considered his poems his finest work, but today his fame rests upon the *Decameron* (1353), a collection of tales supposedly told by a company of persons while in seclusion to escape the Black Death of 1348. These stories give a broad and vivid picture of Italian life, forming a sort of "human comedy" to contrast with Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Boccaccio shows himself much concerned over the shortcomings of the church in his day, as when one of his best-known stories tells of a Parisian Jew who, after a visit to Rome, presented himself for baptism, saying that any church which could survive the corruption he had seen there must indeed be the church of God! Like his friend Petrarch, Boccaccio was a humanist, deeply attached to the study of the Latin classics; he too hunted for ancient manuscripts; and he was proud of his share in establishing the first professorship of Greek in the West.

**French
writers**

France produced little superior literature during these troubled centuries, though the historian Froissart (1337-1410) has left us vivid pictures of court life and battles during the Hundred Years' War. His stories of gallant knights and fair ladies idealized and romanticized chivalry and feudalism. In the next century, Philippe de Commines (1445-1511), a much better historian, wrote a thoughtful account of the reign of Louis XI, whom he had served for many years, and of the Italian war of Charles VIII. François Villon (1431-1463) wrote inspired lyric poetry somewhat resembling the Goliardic verse of the later Middle Ages. England was more fortunate, however, for in the fourteenth century she produced one of her greatest writers, the poet Chaucer.

**Geoffrey
Chaucer**

Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340-1400) was the son of a wealthy London wine merchant who enjoyed connections with the court of Edward III. As a young man, the poet took part in one campaign of the

Hundred Years' War (1359); for several years he was at court or serving on diplomatic missions to France and Italy; he sat once in parliament (1386); and he held various government posts as a protégé of John of Gaunt. His travels enabled him to make the personal acquaintance of such literary men as Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Froissart. In his early days he was much influenced by French poetry, translating the *Roman de la Rose* and other French verse, and a visit to Italy (1373) had an even deeper effect upon his mental development. But though he learned much from foreign writers, Chaucer never was a mere imitator or copier, and his work always was thoroughly English.

The *Canterbury Tales* fill less than half the volume of Chaucer's works, yet it is upon them that his fame firmly rests. They consist of twenty-four stories in verse that supposedly were told by a band of pilgrims on their way to worship at the tomb of St. Thomas à Becket in Canterbury. More interesting and more important to us than the tales themselves is the *Prologue* which Chaucer prefixed to the collection. With deep insight, but also with abounding wit and irony, he here describes the various pilgrims. As the pilgrims included representatives of almost every social class, we see unrolled before us a brilliant panorama of late medieval English society. There is a knight who has fought in Egypt, Spain, and Flanders; a merchant, a carpenter, a sailor, a miller, and a plowman; a doctor and a man of law; and the oft-married Wife of Bath, who quite brazenly defends her lifelong preoccupation with sex. Especially interesting are the eleven members of the clergy. Among them the hypocritical pardoner is the only one whom Chaucer cordially despised, but he smiled at the weaknesses of others—the monk who found his chief joy in horses and hunting; the friar who sweetly listened to the confessions of fair ladies; and the prioress, Madame Eglentyne, whose table manners were a bit too dainty, who was too fond of her lap dogs, and who spoke French too elegantly, "After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe, For French of Paris was to hir unknowe." But there was also a clerk of Oxford who had spent all his money on books and learning, whose most prized possession was twenty volumes of Aristotle, and of whom the poet says, "gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche"; and, above all, we have the poor parson with a large parish, who truly cared for his parishioners, and "Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve, He taughte, but first he folwed it himselve."

Canterbury
Tales

Humanism

Literature
choked by
humanism

No literary men comparable to those just mentioned appeared during the fifteenth century, but humanism and the study of the classics then made great progress in Italy. The humanists' enthusiasm for the Greek and Latin classics turned able men away from creative writing. Only a few of the early Italian humanists need be mentioned here, but they will illustrate the various aspects of humanistic activity.

Manuel
Chrysoloras

Petrarch sometimes lamented the fact that he could not read Greek, and Boccaccio helped establish a professorship of Greek in their native city. Not much progress was made in Greek studies, however, until Chrysoloras began teaching at Florence in 1395. Manuel Chrysoloras (c. 1355–1415), seion of an aristocratic Byzantine family, had

Μετὰ τὴν ἑορτὴν τῆς ἑορτῆς
Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς

Ave maris gratia plena.
dominatrice. benedictio
te in eternum. Amen.
Ite. Ite. Ite. Ite. Ite.
Sicut erat per prophetas
nuntiatum. Amen.
Pater noster qui es in celo.
Sanctus tuus nomen tuum
sanctum regnum tuum. Fiat
voluntas tua. Sicut in celo &
in terra. Pater noster
qui es in celo. Domine
deus. Domine. Domine.
Domine. Domine. Domine.

Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς

Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς

α.	α.	Α.	Υ.	υ.	Υ.
β.	β.	Β.	ϕ.	φ.	Φ.
γ.	γ.	Γ.	χ.	ψ.	Ψ.
δ.	δ.	Δ.	ω.	ω.	Ω.
ε.	ε.	Ε.	ο.	ο.	Ο.
ς.	ς.	Σ.	π.	π.	Π.
ζ.	ζ.	Ζ.	ρ.	ρ.	Ρ.
η.	η.	Η.	σ.	σ.	Σ.
θ.	θ.	Θ.	τ.	τ.	Τ.
ι.	ι.	Ι.	υ.	υ.	Υ.
κ.	κ.	Κ.	φ.	φ.	Φ.
λ.	λ.	Λ.	χ.	χ.	Χ.
μ.	μ.	Μ.	ψ.	ψ.	Ψ.
ν.	ν.	Ν.	ω.	ω.	Ω.
ξ.	ξ.	Ξ.	ο.	ο.	Ο.
ο.	ο.	Ο.	π.	π.	Π.
π.	π.	Π.	ρ.	ρ.	Ρ.
ρ.	ρ.	Ρ.	σ.	σ.	Σ.
ς.	ς.	Σ.	τ.	τ.	Τ.

CHRYSOLORAS' GREEK GRAMMAR. The two last pages of this famous book are shown here. The left-hand page gives the Hail Mary and the Lord's Prayer (Pater Noster) in parallel columns, Latin and Greek. The last page gives the Greek alphabet, with names and sounds of each letter. After circulating in manuscript for almost three-quarters of a century, the Grammar was the first Greek book ever printed, about 1475.

been sent to Italy in 1393 by the emperor, Manuel Paleologus, to beg aid against the Turks. Two years later he returned to the West, where he passed the remainder of his days, lecturing on Greek literature, translating Homer and Plato into Latin, preparing a Greek grammar that remained the standard textbook for many years, traveling through northern Italy and even to Paris, visiting the Emperor Sigismund to urge summoning the Council of Constance, and everywhere arousing enthusiasm for Greek studies. Chrysoloras was the first of a series of Greek scholars who came to Italy to promote such studies, bringing with them not only their enthusiasm but also countless manuscripts of the Greek classics. The fifteenth century therefore saw the study of Greek firmly established as an element of humanistic education, and such it remained for almost five centuries.

Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459), a Florentine who had studied Greek under Chrysoloras, became the most famous humanist of his day. Though he held a secretaryship in the papal curia for fifty years, he showed no interest in ecclesiastical affairs, which he deemed far less important than the advancement of classical learning. He was highly successful in discovering the lost works of Latin authors; he wrote copiously in the manner of Petrarch; he made a reputation for himself as a public orator; his *Facetiae* was a collection of rather broad tales (in Latin) that often ridiculed priests and monks; and he was a vindictive controversialist whose attacks upon rival humanists passed all bounds of decency. Though a man of enormous erudition, Poggio's career lends support to the American medievalist who once charged that the humanists surpassed the scholastics in nothing save their conceit.

**Poggio
Bracciolini**

Laurentius Valla (1406-1457) was a humanist of much greater originality. Born at Rome of north Italian parents, he became a priest and wandered from one university town to another until at last he entered the service of the king of Naples (1435). Twelve years later he became secretary to the humanist pope, Nicholas V (1447-1455), and spent his last ten years at Rome. As Petrarch's numerous disciples had by this time discovered most of the old manuscripts that were lying unheeded in the corners of monastery libraries, Valla turned his attention to other humanistic activities. He became the first great humanist critic. One of his great achievements was to establish the rules of classical Latin grammar so carefully that he could write Latin in a truly Ciceronian style. These studies enabled him to prove conclusively (in 1439) that the "Donation of Constantine" (see page

**Laurentius
Valla**

415) was not composed until several centuries after the time of that Roman emperor. He also showed that, contrary to the opinion of his day, the so-called "Apostles' Creed" was not the joint work of the Twelve Apostles. And above all, his *Notes on the New Testament* (1444), containing the first critical comparison of the Greek and Latin texts, was destined to have a profound influence upon the Protestant reformers as well as upon critical scholarship. His criticism also fell upon the scholastic theologians, whose works he knew much better than Petrarch had, and, like many others in his day, he was most censorious toward priests and monks. The freedom shown in his writings led him into the toils of the Inquisition, from which he was saved only by the intervention of his patron, the king of Naples, but it did not prevent Pope Nicholas from granting him a position of trust in the church. Valla has been hailed as the first scholarly critic of medieval historical, philosophical, and religious theories.

Flavio
Biondo

A humanist of still another type was Flavio Biondo (1388-1463). The growing enthusiasm for classical antiquity, and the frequent discoveries of statues and other works of art in old ruins, led antiquarians to take an interest in learning the exact location of ancient towns and famous buildings. Biondo sought to provide such information in his *Italia Illustrata* (1446), which was the first guide to the archeology and antiquities of ancient Italy. Biondo also composed a large and important *History from the Decline of the Roman Empire* (1439-1453). As a historian he was more interested in accuracy than in literary style, and in his book we find an early statement of the version of world history that remained popular until quite recent times: the brilliant civilization of ancient Greece and Rome, followed by a decline and the barbarian darkness of the Middle Ages, and then the new light of modern times beginning with Petrarch.

Humanist
expression
of a
new spirit

These brief sketches of a few eminent humanists are enough to show how widely their views of the world differed from those of their scholastic predecessors. The feudal and ecclesiastical systems of the Middle Ages were passing away, and the leaders of the victorious commercial classes were beginning to impose their secular view of the world upon thinking persons of all social classes, just as the lords and bishops had formerly imposed their view. In the writings of the ancient humanists found a view of the world somewhat similar to their own, and they joyously accepted it as their guide to life. The ancient writers provided them with philosophies and codes of ethics better adapted to the life of their day than were those of the thirteenth

century. The humanism of the fifteenth century therefore was not a mere continuation of the classical scholarship of the Middle Ages. Jolin of Salisbury had read more deeply than Petrarch in the classics, and he was equally critical of the scholastics, but it would no more have occurred to him to deduce a code of ethics from Cicero and Seneca than it would have occurred to Innocent III to give an important secretaryship to a man who had proved the Donation of Constantine to be a forgery. The great humanists all considered themselves good Christians, and many of them were priests or secretaries attached to bishops or the papal curia, but they no longer identified Christianity with its medieval manifestation.

The humanist historians were equally firm in rejecting the medieval view of the past. In addition to imitating the literary style of Livy or Tacitus, they refused to regard history as a subdivision of theology. They secularized it, and, though they retained the Biblical accounts of early times, they usually omitted Augustine's "Two Cities," the "Four Monarchies," and other characteristic features of the medieval "Christian epic." They invoked history to prove, or at least to illustrate, the superiority of their way of life over that of the Middle Ages. From medieval writers they took over the idea of the "fall of Rome," but they added a contempt for Rome's barbarian successors; they refused to recognize the medieval Empire as the true heir of Rome; and they pictured the Dark Ages as continuing until their own revival of arts and letters. Of course this great readjustment in their view of the past did not take place overnight. Two or three centuries of patient scholarship were required to complete the task, but even in the fifteenth century the main outlines of the new history were laid down clearly. It soon began to exercise a deep influence upon the conduct of men.

**Humanist
history**

The Invention of Printing

Toward the middle of the fifteenth century came one of the world's most important inventions, whose influence upon the intellectual and cultural history of subsequent times can scarcely be overestimated. This was the invention of printing. As early as the second century after Christ, the Chinese had been printing books from carved wooden blocks, one block laboriously carved for each page (see page 393). Similar "block printing" was known in western Europe early in the fifteenth century, after which it was only a step to the

**Johann
Gutenberg**

making of individual letter types that could easily be arranged to form any word desired. During the 1440's a certain Johann Gutenberg, of Mainz, and others in Germany were experimenting with printing from type, and about 1455 appeared the famous Gutenberg Bible.

**Other
inventions**

Equally important was the invention of paper, which was cheaper and more convenient than the papyrus used in antiquity or the parchment (sheepskin) used in the Middle Ages for making books. Paper too was a Chinese invention, known to the Arabs in the eighth century, by them introduced into Sicily and Spain in the twelfth, and in general use in the fifteenth. Even printer's ink had to be invented before printing could succeed. The success of these inventions rested upon two further prerequisites. There first had to be a large reading public, willing and able to buy books if they were cheap enough, and there had to be capitalists willing to invest large sums in presses and type because they hoped to sell the books eventually at a profit. Not until the second half of the fifteenth century could these prerequisites be met.

**Books
produced
cheaply**

Printing presses multiplied rapidly as soon as Gutenberg's invention became known, and when William Caxton set up the first press in England (1477), there were already at least a hundred others operating in Europe. It has been estimated that no less than forty thousand books and pamphlets were published before 1500 and, as early editions averaged between two and three hundred copies, some ten million books had probably been printed. The rather few extant copies of these early books, now collector's items fetching fancy prices, are called "incunabula," from the Latin word for "cradle." Gutenberg's Latin Bible was quickly followed by other religious books and even by treatises in scholastic theology, but it was not long before the humanists too began making use of the new invention. The most scholarly of the early publishers was Aldus Manutius (1450-1515), whose press at Venice produced the famous "Aldine" editions of the Greek and Latin classics.

Renaissance Art

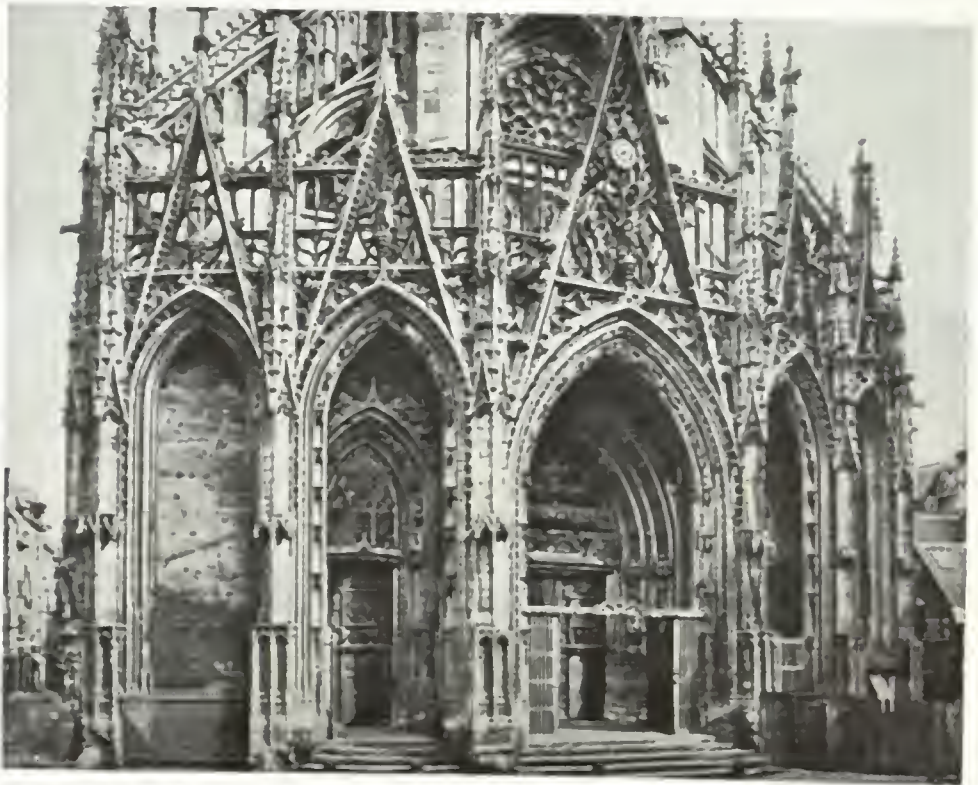
**New styles
in art**

Many people regard the Italian Renaissance as primarily the period of great art which began in the fourteenth century and reached its climax early in the sixteenth, with such famous painters as Leonardo da Vinci, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian. At the same

time other artists, scarcely less famous, were introducing new styles and new techniques, and creating great works in sculpture, architecture, and music. Little would be gained by inserting a catalogue of great names at this point, but it may be possible to indicate in a few sentences the close parallels existing between artistic development and the general intellectual history of the Renaissance.

The Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages reached its highest perfection in France during the thirteenth century, and even before the end of that period it had begun to deteriorate into the overly ornate "Flamboyant Gothic" style. There was little important building in France during the fourteenth century, partly because of the Hundred Years' War, and in the fifteenth century architects found it profitable to devote themselves especially to designing magnificent residences for rich burghers, such as the house of Jacques Coeur at Bourges. France therefore produced little that was new in art.

*Flamboy-
ance of
Gothic art*



ST. MACLOU, AMIENS. Note the elaborate ornamentation and false fronts on this example of Flamboyant Gothic architecture in France.



HOUSE OF JACQUES COEUR, BOURGES. (Culver)

*Italian
imitation of
antiquity*

As in the intellectual life generally, leadership in art then crossed the Alps to Italy. Here Gothic art had never taken root—the enormous Gothic cathedral at Milan is as exotic as is the Byzantine St. Mark's at Venice—and at a rather early date architects and sculptors, like the humanists, began imitating the works of classical antiquity. During the Middle Ages Italian painters had been under strong Byzantine influence, but they cast off this spell at the end of the thirteenth century. As nothing was then known of ancient painting, Italian painters were forced to create their own styles. Though they thought that they too were reviving antiquity, as is shown by their themes drawn from



PALACE OF JUSTICE, ROUEN. (Galloway)

classical mythology and by countless other indications, their styles owe nothing to the ancient painters, whose works have only recently been unearthed at Pompeii and elsewhere.

Historians of art commonly divide the painters and other artists of the Italian Renaissance into schools according to the cities in which they lived and worked. Thus we have the Venetian school, the Sieneſe school, the Umbrian school, and above all the Florentine school. Florence had been a prosperous city in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, rich from her manufacture of cloth and later from her international banking, but only at the end of this period did she assume a distinguished place in the world of arts and letters. At the very end of the thirteenth century, in the days of Dante, the Florentines began

**Florentine
artists**

to build their famous churches, especially the cathedral (1296) and Santa Maria Novella (1283); and Dante's friend Giotto (1276-1337) painted pictures that turned Renaissance art in new directions. Not until a hundred years later, however, do other great names appear. In the first half of the fifteenth century Fra Angelico (1387-1455) was the leading painter, Ghiberti (1378-1455) carved the famous doors to the Baptistry, Brunelleschi (1377-1446) finished the cathedral by adding its dome (1436), and Donatello (1386-1466) completed the break with Gothic sculpture with his great statue of David (1430). During the middle years of this century Florence was ruled by the Medici, who did much to encourage the artistic and intellectual life of their city, but the greatest days of Italian art did not come until after the passing of that family's political power. Thereafter the chief patrons of art in Italy were the popes, who made Rome the scene of the last and most brilliant period of Renaissance art.



ST. PETER'S, ROME

St. Peter's Church at Rome is the most famous architectural triumph of the Renaissance. The Emperor Constantine had built a large church of the basilica type (see page 283) on the supposed site of the tomb of St. Peter, near the ancient circus of Nero. Throughout the Middle Ages it remained one of the world's most revered churches. Here Charlemagne was crowned on Christmas Day, 800, and here many another epoch-making event was solemnized. But during the Avignon period this old St. Peter's fell into such disrepair that Pope Nicholas V decided to replace it with a church worthy of the new papacy and Latin Christendom. After his death (1455), however, the project was forgotten for many years. Julius II laid the cornerstone of the present St. Peter's in 1506, but the completed structure was not ready for dedication until 1626. The first architect was Donato Bramante (1444-1514), sometimes considered the greatest of Renaissance architects, but his plans were greatly altered by his successors. Among the latter may be mentioned Raphael (1483-1520), who is better known for his paintings, Michelangelo (1475-1564), who designed the beautiful dome, and finally Bernini (1598-1680), who

*St. Peter's
at Rome*



ST. PETER'S, ROME (INTERIOR)

added the finishing touches, including the façade which the visitor now sees first as he approaches the building. St. Peter's is the largest church in the world, sometimes even overpowering in its vastness, but while size may be its most striking quality, neither pains nor expense was spared in the decoration of its interior. In it are works by most of the famous artists in that great day.

**Michel-
angelo**

The Renaissance popes found many other occasions to encourage and subsidize art. Thus the Sistine Chapel, in the Vatican adjoining St. Peter's, is famous for its frescoes by many hands, but especially for those painted on the ceiling by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512. Here the artist depicted the Biblical story of creation, while the frescoes by other artists give Biblical scenes from Moses to Christ. As a young man in Florence, Michelangelo had been deeply moved by the preaching of a Dominican friar named Savonarola (see page 664),



LEONARDO DA VINCI (Self portrait). (Bettmann Archive)

and he never completely lost the somber views inculcated by that famous preacher. In later years they reappeared in the huge "Last Judgment," which is placed above the altar in the Sistine Chapel. Painted more than twenty years after the others were finished, this work brings the whole mighty series to a fitting close. In spite of his deep Christianity, Michelangelo loved pagan antiquity as well, and lesser frescoes in the chapel show the Hebrew prophets side by side with pagan sibyls to symbolize the union of Greek and Hebrew traditions in Christianity. The artist thus showed himself a good Christian of the Renaissance period.

One of the most versatile men of the Renaissance period was Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). Though known today chiefly as a painter, because of his "Last Supper" and "Mona Lisa," Leonardo was also a sculptor and architect, a musician, and a poet; he did important work in the field of engineering; and he was one of the first natural scientists of his day. His restless and powerful mind was constantly leaping from one subject to another, always seeking something new and always illuminating whatever it touched. His first great patron was Lorenzo de' Medici; he later served Ludovico Sforza at Milan; he was employed as a military engineer by the notorious Caesar Borgia (see page 660); and in 1516 Francis I persuaded him to come to France, where he died three years later. Leonardo was the outstanding genius of the Renaissance. Perhaps we should say that Leonardo, more than any other one man, was the Renaissance.

**Leonardo
da Vinci**

FRENCH INVASION OF ITALY

The death of Leonardo da Vinci is sometimes taken as the end of the "High Renaissance" in Italy. For several centuries thereafter economic, military, and political misfortunes were to overwhelm the peninsula, which was to be looted time and again by invaders from the north. Conditions were no longer propitious for a high civilization. The first of these invaders were the French. As we have seen (page 607), Louis XI of France had bequeathed to his thirteen-year-old son, Charles VIII (1483-1498), a kingdom stronger and richer than it had been for two centuries. A regent conducted the government for eight years, and even after Charles began to rule in his own name (1492), his weak intellect rendered him the easy prey of crafty advisers. He did not inherit his father's shrewd grasp of political realities, and contemporary critics complained that his foreign

**Charles VIII
of France**



CHARLES VIII. (Bettmann Archive)

policies, thoroughly medieval in character, were drawn largely from the chivalric romances that had been read to him in childhood. At any rate, Charles abandoned his father's realistic diplomacy and dreamed up a childish project for conquering a vast empire in the Mediterranean basin. First he would take Naples, claiming it as a heritage from his grandmother's ancestor, Charles of Anjou (d. 1285; see page 482). Next he would recapture Constantinople from the Turks and make himself ruler of a revived Byzantine empire. After that, other territories between France and Turkey could easily be added. The plan was absurd, but looting Italy seemed attractive to countless Frenchmen who were not foolish enough to share Charles's romantic dreams of grandeur. The leaders of various factions in the Italian cities were therefore persuaded that the French king would

aid them against their local rivals, and when Ludovico Sforza of Milan (1451–1508) invited him to expel Ferrante, the brutal tyrant of Naples, Charles light-heartedly embarked upon his great adventure.

The French invasion of Italy was a parade rather than a war. Crossing the Alps in September, 1494, Charles was welcomed in Milan, in Pisa, and in Florence. After brief negotiations with Pope Alexander VI, he passed through Rome, and in February, 1495, he entered Naples, wearing the long cloak of a Byzantine emperor. Ferrante had by this time been dead for over a year, and his feeble successor abdicated and fled. The French armies ran wild in Naples (with tragic consequences for Europe; see page 662 n.), but their stay was not long for, while they were disporting themselves, diplomats assembled quietly at Venice to form an anti-French coalition consisting of Venice, Milan, the papacy, Ferdinand of Aragon, and the Emperor Maximilian. In the face of such opposition, Charles hurriedly fled Naples. The troops he left behind were soon driven out by the Spaniards, who thereupon restored Ferrante's grandson. The French king was planning a new raid upon Italy when he was killed in an accident (April, 1498).

*The French
in Italy*

As Charles died without direct heir, the throne of France passed to his second cousin, Louis XII (1498–1515). The new king at once resumed the wars in Italy, continuing the old pretensions and adding a claim to Milan. We have seen (page 601) that long ago Charles V of France had married off his sister to Gian Galeazzo Visconti, tyrant of Milan (1360). Continuing this French alliance, Gian Galeazzo's daughter (by another wife) was married to Louis of Orléans, brother of Charles VI. Eventually she became the grandmother of Louis XII. Louis therefore put forward a claim that he had been robbed when Francesco Sforza seized Milan (1450), and he now proposed to vindicate his honor by occupying his lawful inheritance. Crossing the Alps in the summer of 1499, he entered Milan, captured Ludovico Sforza, and held him prisoner in France until his death eight years later. Louis then entered into an alliance with Ferdinand of Aragon to divide southern Italy (1500). With the blessing of Pope Alexander VI, the allies easily took Naples, but they quickly fell to quarreling with each other, and the Spaniards expelled the French (1504). Thereafter Ferdinand retained Naples, and until the coming of Napoleon, almost three hundred years later, this city remained the center of Spanish power in Italy.

Louis XII

**Florentine
Republic
(1494–
1512)**

The invasion of Charles VIII also had important effects upon the history of Florence. After dominating the city for many years, Lorenzo de' Medici (1449–1492), known as "the Magnificent," had been succeeded by his son Pietro. This young man was related to the king of Naples, both through his mother and through his wife, and was his formal ally. Nevertheless, he received Charles cordially in 1494, surrendered Pisa and other Florentine territories to him, and promised him a huge subsidy. His craven attitude so disgusted the populace that they expelled Pietro from Florence and set up a republic. At first the guiding spirit in this republic was the Dominican friar Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498; see page 664), but after his death it continued for several years under less godly auspices.

**Politics of
Julius II**

Meantime Pope Alexander VI had been succeeded by Julius II (1503–1513), who aspired to temporal power over as much as possible of Italy. As Venice then held the northern half of the old Papal States, Julius first formed an anti-Venetian league with the Emperor Maximilian, Louis XII, and Ferdinand of Aragon. War was resumed in 1508, and for a while the forces of the league were successful. But as soon as Julius had what he wanted, he cynically deserted his allies and joined Venice. The remaining allies fell to fighting among themselves and, as we have seen, Louis was eventually driven from Italy (1513). Julius and the Spaniards then rearranged Italy to suit their ambitions, enlarging the Papal States and restoring the Medici to Florence and the Sforzas to Milan. Their arrangements were only temporary, however, and the devastation of Italy was soon resumed by more powerful princes. Italy was ruined for centuries to come, but the wars had at least one advantage. A few of the invaders were able to appreciate the high civilization they found in Italy and remembered it when they returned home. The spirit of the Italian Renaissance was thus carried to northern Europe, especially France, and Charles's campaign of 1494 is sometimes taken as a crucial event in the history of French culture.

XIV

Luther (*Bettmann Archive*)



THE REFORM OF RELIGION

THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION—
LUTHER AND HIS COLLEAGUES—
THE CATHOLIC REFORMERS

Political Leaders	Popes	Catholic Reformers	Protestants	Contemporary Events
1493-1519 Maximilian emperor	1494-1503 Alexander VI	1494-1498 Savonarola in Florence		1492 Columbus discovers America
1509-1547 Henry VIII (England)	1503-1513 Julius II	1500-1515 Christian humanists: Colet, Erasmus, More		1494 Charles VIII invades Italy
1515-1547 Francis I (France)	1513-1521 Leo X	1507-1517 Ximenes in Spain		1506 St. Peter's begun
1516 [Concordat]		1516 Erasmus' Greek New Testament	1517 Luther's 95 Theses	1512 Medici return to Florence
1519-1556 Charles V emperor	1522-1523 Adrian VI		1521 Luther excommunicated	1520 Prices begin to rise rapidly [Spanish gold]
	1523-1534 Clement VII			1525 Peasants revolt in Germany
			1529-1536 Reformation parliament (England)	1527 Imperial troops sack Rome
	1534-1549 Poul III		d. 1531 Zwingli	
		1534 Society of Jesus	1534 English Act of Supremacy	1535- Michelangelo's Last Judgment
		1545-1563 Council of Trent	1536 Calvin's Institutes	
1547-1553 Edward VI (England)				d. 1543 Copernicus
1553-1558 Mary (England)	1555-1559 Poul IV		1555 Peace of Augsburg	
			1556 Cronmer burned	
1556-1598 Philip II (Spain)	1572-1585 Gregory XIII		1559 Elizabethan Settlement	
1558-1603 Elizabeth (England)	1585-1590 Sixtus V			

37. THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

THE half-century that began shortly before 1500 was a period of radical change in almost every phase of Europe's social life, but nowhere were changes greater or more fundamental than in the field of religion. The term "Protestant Reformation," consecrated by four centuries of use, gives a quite inadequate conception of what was then happening, for it seemingly limits reform to the countries where Protestantism eventually prevailed. To correct this misconception, historians sometimes speak of a "Counter Reformation" within the Catholic Church, thereby implying quite erroneously that Catholic reform came only in answer to Protestant criticism. Other writers prefer to use the terms "Protestant Revolt" and "Catholic Reformation" to describe the changes in question. They argue that, by breaking away from the Catholic Church, the Protestants left the task of reform to those who loyally remained in the old organization. These terms, too, are unsatisfactory. No one in the sixteenth century believed that he was withdrawing from the Holy Catholic Church or admitted that he had been lawfully expelled from it. Every faction insisted that it was perpetuating true Christianity, which others unfortunately were forsaking, but each admitted that it was subjecting the church to much-needed reforms.

As a matter of fact, pious people had been demanding a thoroughgoing reform of the church "in head and members" for more than a hundred years before Martin Luther came upon the scene. Extensive reforms eventually appeared in every country of Europe, but sometimes they came under one leadership and sometimes under another. Likewise, new ideas about religion were appearing on every hand.

Sixteenth-century changes

Reformers and innovators

The medieval empire was then being superseded by national states, and scholasticism was giving way before humanism, so we are not surprised to find that the ecclesiastical and theological systems of the Middle Ages were likewise being replaced by something new. In a period when sudden and drastic changes were disturbing every field of human activity, it could not have been otherwise.

If, therefore, we use the word "Reformation" as a convenient name for this general reorganization of the religious life of western Europe, we do not mean to imply that either Protestants or Catholics were alone in their desire to reform abuses or to recognize new ideas. Neither party enjoyed a monopoly on good intentions or high ideals, and no one church was, more truly than its rivals, the heir and successor of the apostolic, the Constantinian, and the medieval churches. As the true reformation began long before Luther, we must open our

*Protestant
and
Catholic
reformers*



ALEXANDER VI, Painted by Pinturicchio. (Bettmann Archive)

discussion with a survey of religious conditions in Europe in the fifteenth century. Some parts of this picture are far from lovely.

CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCH

The private lives of popes and other high officials of the church were much criticized during the pre-Reformation period. These popes seemed to take more interest in humanism, art, and their private pleasures than they did in the church or religion, and several were noted for their grossly immoral lives. Innocent VIII (1484-1492) occasioned scandal by his loose living, but the most notorious of the popes was his successor, the Spaniard Roderigo Borgia, who became Alexander VI (1492-1503). He had been created cardinal by his

**Pope Alex-
ander VI**



LEO X, Painted by Raphael. (Bettmann Archive)

uncle, Pope Calixtus III (1455–1458), when only twenty-five years old (1456), and it was amid widespread charges of bribery that he was elected pope thirty-six years later. Even as pope, Alexander was dominated by his two inordinate passions, lust and family affection. A horde of his Spanish cousins descended upon Rome, where all were properly cared for, but Alexander's greatest concern was for his numerous illegitimate children.

**Caesar and
Lucrezia
Borgia**

The two most famous of these children were Caesar and Lucrezia Borgia. As Lucrezia apparently was a rather spineless creature who merely did what her father and brother ordered, a kindly critic can hope that she really was not so bad as has been alleged, but Caesar Borgia was one of the world's great criminals, a veritable "virtuoso in crime." Born in 1476, he was created cardinal by his father at the tender age of sixteen, but five years later he resigned that dignity in order to become a professional soldier. He and his father had set their hearts on a kingdom of their own in central Italy, but their schemes collapsed with Alexander's death. Caesar Borgia was killed in a minor battle four years later (1507), after which Lucrezia lived quietly as duchess of Ferrara until she died in 1519, aged thirty-nine years.

Julius II

Alexander was succeeded by Julius II (1503–1513), who had dominated Innocent VIII and who believed that Alexander had defrauded him of the papacy in 1492. The new pope was less a priest than a soldier and statesman, whose ambition it was to revive the Papal States and bring as much of Italy as possible under his personal rule. By quickly humbling Caesar Borgia, and by playing off one Italian prince against another, he secured firm control of the Papal States. Little time or energy then remained for the church and religion.

Leo X

Next came Leo X (1513–1521), the second son of Lorenzo de' Medici, "the Magnificent." As pope he devoted himself especially to improving the status of his family at Florence, where it had fallen on evil days (see page 654), and to shining as a patron of the arts. His lavish expenditures quickly reduced the papacy to bankruptcy and forced him to such dire expedients as issuing indulgences wholesale and selling cardinals' hats. Leo's successor was a Dutch prelate, Adrian VI (1522–1523), an able and upright man and the last non-Italian ever to be chosen pope. His early death was a tragedy for the church. After him came another Medici, Clement VII (1523–1534), who, like his cousin Leo X, concerned himself too much with family affairs and was quite incapable of handling the many delicate problems then facing the papacy. The last of this sorry line of worldly popes was

Paul III (1534-1549), who used his high office primarily to advance the interests of his family, the Farnese of Parma. Even he is to be credited, however, with several beneficial reforms in the church.

With popes such as these ruling the church, it is little wonder that lesser churchmen followed their example, but other forces were equally effective in debauching the clergy. We have seen that poverty-stricken nobles often placed their younger sons in highly paid positions even though they were devoid of religious feeling and brought scandal to the church by their dissipated lives. Bishops and abbots were sometimes mere children who drew large salaries without ever visiting their churches or abbeys. Under such leadership parish priests came to neglect their duties, monks and nuns failed to live up to the rules of their orders, and the ignorance of friars became a byword. In Italy men complained bitterly of the political activities of the popes, but the loudest complaints north of the Alps were directed against the ceaseless financial exactions of these unworthy clergymen and especially against the indulgences which they sold so unashamedly to ignorant persons.

*Unworthy
clergymen*

At the same time a deplorable decline in the intellectual life of the common people was due in part—but not wholly—to the decline of the clergy. In times gone by, the lower clergy, had been the intellectual as well as the spiritual leaders of their parishes, but now their inability to fill this noble function adequately led to an appalling state among the leaderless masses. Superstitions multiplied, the fear of magic darkened the lives of countless persons, and men became hysterical about witches. Belief in witchcraft of some sort is, of course, almost as old as humanity itself, but in Greek and Roman antiquity, or even in the Middle Ages, it never took on the terrifying proportions that it assumed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was then universally believed that certain women, called witches, had sold their souls to the devil, in return for which they were granted the power to raise storms, bring insect pests, produce barrenness in women or cattle, travel rapidly through the air, kill or injure people secretly from a distance, and perform many other terrible and marvelous works. The church had no doubts as to the existence of witchcraft, which it classified as a form of heresy, and it undertook to stamp out the fire by executing all known witches. In 1484 Innocent VIII assigned this congenial task to the Inquisition, which then burned thousands of old women on the basis of "confessions" wrung from them by torture.

*Super-
stition*

**The Spanish
Inquisition**

It was Spain that the Inquisition achieved its greatest infamy. Here it concerned itself not only with heretics and witches but with Jews as well. During the long period of the reconquest, Jewish citizens had been too valuable to lose, and the Christians had not bothered them greatly. In the thirteenth century, when Germany was periodically convulsed with massacres of Jews, and when England and France were expelling all Jews from their borders (1290 and 1306 respectively; see page 542), Spain had remained a refuge for the oppressed sons of Israel. But as the crusade against the Moors drew to its close, Spanish religious zeal turned against the Jews, and only a few weeks after the fall of Granada a decree was issued forcing upon them the cruel alternative of baptism or exile (1492). Large numbers fled the country but others submitted. It was not long, however, before Christian zealots began charging that, in spite of feigned conversions, the Jews went right on worshipping as before. The Inquisition intervened and thousands were burned at the stake, nominally as "relapsed heretics." Conservative writers estimate that Tomás de Torquemada, inquisitor-general of Spain from 1483 to 1498, burned at least two thousand heretics, witches, and Jews, while his subordinates executed many more. His name still remains a synonym for bloodthirsty bigotry, and under his leadership the Spanish Inquisition became one of the nightmares of history.

**Anxieties
and
apocalypses**

Other evidence is equally eloquent in showing the decline of the church. Its financial exactions were doubly odious because of the economic depression that prevailed through most of the fifteenth century. Conditions began to improve in the last quarter of the century, but the accompanying social changes threw countless persons into deep confusion. Thousands flocked from the countryside to the new towns, where wealth came to a few while the majority led wretched and hopeless lives. Finding themselves in strange and unpleasant circumstances, they were filled with apprehensions and anxieties as to what the morrow might bring, and the church provided little comfort. At just this time, too, the sudden appearance of syphilis threw all Europe into a panic,¹ and as moral standards were

¹ The early history of this dread disease is far from clear. It may have been present in mild form from ancient times (some writers note its resemblance to the leprosy of the Old Testament), but authorities agree that it first became virulent at Naples in 1495. Recent writers have returned to the old theory that it was first brought to Europe from America by three Indians who returned with Columbus from his first voyage. They spread it in Barcelona, whence sailors carried it to Naples. Here a French army (see page 653) became infected, soldiers



DÜRER: MELANCHOLIA

then extremely low, the disease spread through Europe like wildfire, wreaking fearful havoc everywhere. Because of these many anxieties there was a revival of the apocalyptic excitement of the Middle Ages, with popular preachers luridly predicting the speedy end of all things. The Augustinian order, of which Luther was a member, revived

carried the disease back to France, and from there it quickly passed to the rest of Europe. Though knowing that it was contagious, no one then suspected the exact manner in which syphilis is transmitted, yet the disease was widely hailed as God's punishment for sin, and it became the theme of many an alarmist sermon on the eve of the Reformation.

interest in the ideas of Joachim of Floris (see page 521), whose works were reprinted at Venice in 1516. The anxious forebodings of the people are also shown in many macabre drawings and woodcuts of the day. Thus in his unforgettable "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" the German artist Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) pictured Conquest, War, Famine, and Death trampling down the kings and peoples of the earth (1498). Other famous drawings by Dürer depict such themes as "The Knight, Death, and the Devil," "Melancholia," and "Death on a Horse."

Attempts at Church Reform

**Widespread
demands
for reform**

Conditions in the church thus went from bad to worse, and on every hand complaints grew louder. When it became apparent that the pope would not willingly remedy conditions, and that church councils were impotent against him, scandalized Christians sought other means of effecting reform. A few of these early reformers may be mentioned as illustrations of what countless persons were attempting on the eve of the Reformation.

**Nicholas
of Cusa**

Nicholas of Cusa (1401–1464), born in a village near the present frontier of Germany and Luxembourg, was educated in Holland and at Padua. At the Council of Basel he strongly defended conciliar supremacy and urged thoroughgoing reform in the church, and while he later became reconciled to the supremacy of the pope, he remained a reformer all his life. After becoming a cardinal (1448), he spent much of his time traveling from monastery to monastery in Holland and Germany, correcting abuses. Nicholas was also a theologian and a humanist, rejecting the rationalism of the old scholastics and minimizing the role of the organized church in religious life. He declared that God can be known only by intuition or mystical experience, but he insisted that everyone is capable of such experience. At times he even dreamed of uniting Christians, Jews, and Moslems on the basis of this fundamental religious experience which is common to all men. Though unacquainted with Valla's work, Nicholas denied the authenticity of the Donation of Constantine (see page 641), and he anticipated some of Copernicus's views regarding the rotation of the earth on its axis.

**Girolamo
Savonarola**

Girolamo Savonarola (1452–1498) was a reformer of quite a different sort. This Dominican friar first attracted attention by his vehement preaching at Florence, where he excoriated the sins of the

day and prophesied that Italy would soon be scourged and purified by an invader from the north. Then, in 1494, Charles VIII of France invaded Italy (see page 653), the Medici were expelled from Florence, and a Florentine republic was set up. From the very first, Savonarola was the guiding spirit of this republic, striving to bring it under the direct rule of God. He induced his fellow citizens to name Jesus Christ their King (Christmas, 1495) and to adopt a puritanical manner of life, burning their frivolous books and pictures along with playing cards, cosmetics, and other "vanities." (Just before one such holocaust, a Venetian speculator offered to buy the doomed articles for 22,000 gold florins—metallic value, almost \$50,000—but the authorities merely added his portrait to the pyre.) Savonarola won the respect, and even the active support, of many important political and intellectual leaders in Florence, the populace revered him as a



SAVONAROLA. (Bettman Archive)

prophet and saint, and in his own heart he was convinced of his divine mission. But such hysterical enthusiasm could not last forever, and the courageous friar overreached himself when he publicly demanded the dethronement of Alexander VI, after vigorously denouncing his vices. He was excommunicated forthwith, and all Florence was placed under an interdict. Savonarola was then hanged and his body burned (May 23, 1498).

A third reformer was the Spaniard Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros (1437-1517). After completing his theological education with six years at Rome, and gaining an important post in the church as a secular priest, Ximenes suddenly relinquished his position to become a Franciscan friar. During the next few years he distinguished himself by the austerity of his life. In 1492, however, he was appointed confessor to Queen Isabella, after which he rose rapidly in both church and state. Two years later he became provincial (governor) of the Franciscan order in Spain; in 1495 he was appointed archbishop of Toledo and primate (leading bishop) of Spain; in 1507 he was created cardinal and inquisitor-general of Spain; in 1509 he led a crusade against the Moors in Africa; and after the death of King Ferdinand (1516) he was regent of Spain for several months. During the last twenty years of his life Ximenes was the most powerful churchman in Spain, and he consistently devoted his great talents to the reform of the church. In the face of powerful opposition, he induced his own Franciscans to improve their manner of life, after which he turned his attention to reforming the other orders and the secular clergy, inspiring them with a new zeal for their religion. Ximenes is justly credited with preparing the Spanish clergy for their later achievements in Mexico and other parts of the New World.

Ximenes was especially interested in raising the intellectual level of his clergy, to which end he opened a new university at Alcalá for training high church officials (1508). In addition to teaching the traditional scholasticism, this university admitted the new humanism of the Renaissance and laid special emphasis upon Biblical studies. To promote such studies, Ximenes assembled a group of Greek and Hebrew scholars to prepare the famous Complutensian Polyglot Bible. (Complutum was the Latin name for Alcalá.) This sumptuous edition of the Bible, in six large volumes, presented the Latin Vulgate version of the Old Testament flanked on one side by the original Hebrew text and on the other by the Greek version; in the New Testament, the Greek and Latin texts stood side by side. The printing of the New

**Francisco
Ximenes**

**The Complu-
tensian
Bible**

Testament was completed in 1514, that of the Old Testament in 1517, but theologians of the old school prevented sale of the work until 1522. This Complutensian Polyglot is one of the great works of scholarship produced in the sixteenth century, and it remains the glory of Alcalá.

**The French
Concordat
of 1516**

Finally, mention must be made of the Concordat of 1516, negotiated by Pope Leo X and Francis I of France. Soon after he came to the throne, early in 1515, Francis invaded Italy (see page 737) and inflicted a severe defeat upon the armies of an alliance in which Leo participated. This victory presented a favorable opportunity for settling various controversies between church and state in France, and the resulting concordat (treaty) remained the fundamental law of the French church until 1790. Setting aside the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (1438; see page 619), it provided that thereafter bishops and abbots should be nominated by the king but consecrated by the pope; that the king might tax the clergy while the pope might collect annates (a fee from the clergy); and that except in a few special cases no ecclesiastical lawsuit might be carried to a court outside France. Other clauses in the concordat were designed to raise the level of the French clergy, setting minimum standards of age and education for the higher church officials and limiting the power of the nobles to fill lucrative offices with their younger sons. The pope and the king thus divided the French church between them, with the lion's share going to the king and with the French clergy losing most of their "Gallican liberties." Persons who had been hoping for a radical reform of the church were much disappointed in this concordat. They continued to demand reform more loudly than ever, but the king and his friends, satisfied with what they had won, were now averse to further changes.

Religious Revival

**New
expressions
of religion**

Meantime a great religious awakening was slowly spreading through western Europe. As at other times when the organized church failed to satisfy men's religious needs, people began to give expression to their religious emotions in new and unconventional ways. Such men had no intention of withdrawing from the Catholic Church, or of founding new churches, yet they often disregarded the church organization, and they usually were tintured with the individualism that was so characteristic of the new day. These religious innovators were likely to be persons of rather humble station in life, while those who

enjoyed a worldly success under the old religion disapproved of them heartily. As time went on, however, their ideas became more widely popular and, long before the appearance of Luther, eminent churchmen had begun to grant them serious attention. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that men like Nicholas of Cusa, who were inspired by the new piety, began to hold high offices in the church. At any rate, these religious innovators of the fifteenth century were preparing the way for the great Protestant and Catholic reformers of the next century.

The new piety took many forms, some of which were quite simple. Thus it became popular to recite a series of prayers with a rosary—a simple string of beads, with one bead for each prayer. This form of worship apparently was introduced about 1460, and the first Confraternity of the Rosary was founded at Cologne in 1475. Likewise it became a common practice to decorate churches with a series of paintings known as the “Stations of the Cross.” Pilgrims to the Holy Land customarily visited the sites associated with the trial and death of Jesus in a certain order, following the *Via Dolorosa*. These scenes were now pictured in paintings which brought some of the benefits of a pilgrimage to persons who could not make the long journey to Palestine. When block printing made it possible to reproduce drawings cheaply (see page 643), religious pictures became popular, and even the poor would often decorate their living rooms with such prints.

**New aids
to piety**

The invention of printing, and the making of relatively inexpensive books, enabled more persons to possess books of their own, and books of piety were among the most popular. One such work was the *Golden Legend*, a collection of brief lives of the saints composed about 1290 by Jacobus de Varagine, archbishop of Genoa. It had been in demand from the first, but printing made it doubly so. A Latin edition, printed in 1469, was quickly followed by translations into several modern languages. An English version was one of the first books printed by William Caxton (1483). A few years later Cardinal Ximenes of Spain printed a series of pious romances, somewhat resembling the popular romances of chivalry. Most important of all, however, was the Bible. Wycliffe had urged that everyone read the Bible and had translated it into English for his fellow countrymen (see page 621). During the next few years several translations were made into modern languages. Popular Bible reading came to be associated with heresy, however, and church authorities frowned upon it, declaring that only well-

**Religious
books**

educated persons, able to read Latin, could understand the Bible correctly.

**Brethren
of the
Common
Life**

Another new type of piety, known as the *Devotio Moderna*, was associated with a monastery at Windesheim in the Netherlands. Gerhard Groote (1340–1384), a Dutch contemporary of Wycliffe, led the life of a successful scholar for several years before a deep religious conversion convinced him of the vanity of his early successes. He withdrew to a monastery for a time, then began preaching zealously, and, when silenced by his bishop, retired to his native town of Deventer. There he gathered about him a group of disciples later known as the "Brethren of the Common Life." After Groote's death, the Brethren settled at Windesheim, some twenty miles away. The members of this community were bound by no vows, and they included both priests and laymen. They could leave the monastery at will, but while there they held all things in common and worked together, usually at copying manuscripts. The idea spread, and within a few years there were about forty such houses for men, and twice as many for women, most of them in Holland, northern France, and western Germany.

**Thomas
à Kempis**

The nature of the "Modern Devotion," as developed by Groote and his followers, can best be learned from a study of its most famous product, the little book entitled *The Imitation of Christ*, which is attributed to Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471). Thomas passed most of his long life at the house of the Brethren at Zwolle, a few miles from Windesheim. Like St. Francis before them, the Brethren made very serious efforts to conduct their lives according to the precepts of the Gospels, yet they differed markedly from their great predecessor. Thomas à Kempis was primarily a monk, seeking peace and brotherly love within the quiet walls of a cloister, not a friar seeking out the poor in order to preach to them and relieve their distress. His book has remained a popular manual of piety, widely used by both Catholics and Protestants. There are translations into some sixty languages, among them an English version by John Wesley, the founder of Methodism. The *Imitatio Christi* has probably exercised a deeper influence upon Christian piety than any other one book except the Bible.

Schools

The Brethren of the Common Life were also famous for the schools attached to many of their houses. Here they trained their pupils in the Modern Devotion but also gave them excellent instruction in other matters. Though perfectly orthodox, they showed little interest in the details of scholastic theology, and they preferred teaching the Latin

classics. Many leaders in church reform are numbered among the alumni of these schools. Thus Nicholas of Cusa and the great Erasmus, prince of the humanists, were trained in their school at Deventer; Martin Luther studied under them at Magdeburg; and their Collège de Montaigu at Paris was attended successively by Erasmus (1495-1496), John Calvin (1526-1528), and Ignatius Loyola (1528-1529). Throughout life these men all bore the marks of the rigorous training they received from the Brethren of the Common Life.

Not everyone in western Europe was touched by this new piety or by the religious awakening of the fifteenth century. In fact, those who accepted the new ideas were a spiritual elite, and most people remained much as before. But it should be borne in mind that at this time the old forms of piety were breaking down rapidly. Only the more ignorant now worshiped relics or bought indulgences. Countless pious Christians were vaguely seeking new forms of worship, and the reformers of the next century provided them with what they sought.

*Passing of
the older
piety*

Christian Humanism

The closing decade of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth saw the Italian Renaissance at high tide, with Italian leadership in the domains of thought and beauty unquestioned everywhere. During these years, however, the light of the Renaissance began to shine more brightly beyond the Alps. Early in the sixteenth century the universities of northern Europe reluctantly began admitting the new humanistic study of Greek classics; new colleges made it the basis of their instruction; and wealthy patrons endowed professorships in Greek. Heidelberg and Erfurt were early centers of the new humanistic learning in Germany; hardy spirits at Oxford revolted against scholasticism and began studying Greek several years before Corpus Christi College was founded (1516) as the first of that university's Renaissance colleges; Cambridge welcomed two new colleges (Christ's, 1505, and St. John's, 1511); and in Spain the university at Alcalá accepted the new learning. Resistance was stronger at Paris, but Greek was studied there too, and in 1530 Francis I set up the school now known as the Collège de France to teach the three ancient languages.

*Humanism
in northern
Europe*

In northern Europe the struggle between the old learning and the new took many forms, but one famous controversy must be mentioned in passing. At the beginning of the century the most distinguished

*Letters of
Obscure
Men*

humanist in Germany was Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522). After studying at Heidelberg, Paris, and Basel, he had visited Italy, where he perfected his knowledge of Greek and became Europe's best Christian student of Hebrew. Early in the new century Reuchlin fell into controversy with a baptized Jew named Pfefferkorn, who was campaigning against his former coreligionists with all the fury and bigotry of a recent convert. When he proposed the destruction of all Hebrew books, the Dominicans of the Inquisition sought Reuchlin's aid (1510). To their disappointment he replied that, in his opinion, the Hebrew books were not merely harmless but even helpful to scholars. Pfefferkorn and the Dominicans vented their rage in attacks upon Reuchlin; Reuchlin replied; and the ensuing pamphlet war acrimoniously debated the whole question of the new learning. When the universities declared against Reuchlin, he retaliated by publishing a book of commendatory letters from eminent humanists, under the title *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae* ("Letters of Eminent Men"). This publication suggested to some of his friends the happy idea of a second book, *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* ("Letters of Obscure Men," 1514–1517), supposedly a reply to the eminent men but really a terrific satire upon the ignorance and bigotry of the Inquisitors and of the conservative faction in general. The effects of this controversy quickly reached beyond the limits of the learned world, for just at the moment when educated people throughout Germany were howling with laughter at the bad Latin and idiotic arguments attributed to Reuchlin's persecutors, Martin Luther raised his voice as a reformer.

**Marsilio
Ficino**

Italian humanism was changing its character at the end of the fifteenth century. Some men calling themselves humanists were no longer interested in anything more important than parading their ability to write Ciceronian Latin. Thus we read of a certain cardinal who refused to read the Bible, fearful lest Jerome's barbarous language corrupt his own elegant Latin style! More serious scholars, on the other hand, continued to devote their careful attention to matters of religion and theology. The most eminent humanist of the day was Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), a Florentine famous for the Latin translation of Plato which he made in the hope of rendering Christian theology more attractive by reconciling it with Plato. Ficino's understanding, or rather his misunderstanding, of Plato was thoroughly Neo-Platonic. His friend, the young and brilliant Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), went even further and learned Hebrew, not in order

to understand the Scriptures better, but to read the Cabala, which were strange Jewish writings, full of occult and mystical ideas and presenting Platonic mysticism in an exaggerated form. When such airy speculations became popular, the old scholarly and critical humanism of Laurentius Valla was quickly forgotten.

Beyond the Alps, humanistic scholars of the old school fared better, but there too the revival of interest in religion turned humanistic studies in new directions. The northern humanists developed what has been called "Christian humanism." They retained the solid and critical scholarship of Valla and his followers, but they applied it to the Bible and the Church Fathers rather than to the pagan classics, and they showed little interest in the speculations of the new Neo-Platonists. The scholars who edited the Complutensian Polyglot were not concerned with the Cabala, just as Pico would have been quite incapable of editing a Hebrew text.

**"Christian
humanism"**

The new Christian humanism blossomed especially in England, Holland, and France. John Colet (1467-1519), after studying at Oxford and Paris and in Italy, began lecturing on the Bible, disdaining the old scholastic predilections for allegories or for texts that could be made to support orthodox theology, and making serious efforts to understand the thought of the sacred writers. Becoming dean of St. Paul's in London (1504), he reorganized the school attached to that cathedral and made it one of the more important centers of humanistic learning in England. Sir Thomas More (1478-1535), author of the famous *Utopia* (1516) describing an imaginary but ideal land, was a friend of Colet and equally interested in the new humanism. In France, Lefèvre d'Étaples (c. 1450-1537) was the leading Christian humanist. After visiting Italy and carefully studying the writings of Nicholas of Cusa, he turned to Biblical studies and anticipated many of Luther's fundamental ideas. The most famous and most important of all the Christian humanists, however, was Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536).

**Colet and
More in
England**

Though born at Gouda in Holland, the illegitimate son of a priest, Erasmus always boasted himself a citizen of Rotterdam. He received his early schooling from the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer, where he acquired a love of learning that dominated his whole life. After being ordained priest, he continued his studies at Paris and Oxford. At the latter university he met Colet, who persuaded him to devote his life to Christian learning, and later he lived in the house of Thomas More. Erasmus made a European reputation with his *Adages*

**Desiderius
Erasmus**



ERASMUS, Painted by Holbein. (Louvre)

and especially with his *Praise of Folly* (1511), in which he mercilessly satirized the society of his day. Thereafter he was the literary dictator of Europe, on terms of familiarity with kings, emperors, and popes, corresponding with hundreds of persons, entering into countless literary controversies, and always defending the cause of intelligence and scholarship against superstition and ignorance. During his later years he edited the works of several of the Church Fathers, but his most significant contribution to scholarship was his Greek New Testament (1516). Here for the first time scholars saw the Greek text in

print (the Complutensian New Testament was already printed but not yet on sale) and they learned, to the dismay of many, that occasionally the original Greek text differed markedly from the current Latin version.

These Christian humanists were ardently devoted to the reform of both church and society. They were scholars, however, and they sincerely believed that the reforms they desired could best be accomplished by education. They were sure that their scholarship, especially Biblical scholarship, could discover the truth about theology and religion, and their confidence in the essential goodness of mankind convinced them that, if this truth were known to all men, it would be accepted in a spirit of toleration and reasonableness. They had as their goal a religion inculcating the ethics of the Gospels as disclosed by the most meticulous Biblical scholarship, but teaching little or no dogma and worshipping with a very simple ritual; led by an enlightened clergy that would correct abuses and eradicate superstition; practicing a broad toleration of divergent views and respecting the freedom of conscience of every Christian man; yet thoroughly Catholic in the sense that it was all-inclusive and maintained a continuity with earlier Christianity. This lofty ideal was shared by the Christian humanists of the day, and it inspired countless reformers on the eve of Luther's revolt. But these Christian humanists insisted that the reforms be carried out inside the Catholic Church. At first they showed an interest in Luther, but when the reformer left the church, Erasmus and his friends refused to follow. The Christian humanists were therefore precursors of the "Counter-Reformation" rather than of Protestantism.

*Humanists
and
reformers*

38. LUTHER AND HIS COLLEAGUES

*Luther's
early
education*

MARTIN LUTHER was born at Eisleben, in central Germany, on November 10, 1483. His father was a coal miner who, by leasing a mine, had eventually raised himself to a position of importance in his community. After attending the school of the Brethren of the Common Life at nearby Magdeburg, and later studying at Eisenach, young Martin entered the university at Erfurt (1501), intending to become a lawyer. Soon after receiving his master of arts degree, however, he left the university (July, 1505) and entered the monastery of the Augustinian friars in Erfurt. This drastic change of plan is commonly attributed to a rash vow made when lightning struck a tree near which he was standing. But Luther had already been considering such a step—otherwise, the idea would scarcely have occurred to him during his momentary fright—and he piously regarded the lightning as a warning from heaven.

*Luther
as a monk*

In the monastery Luther studied the Bible and Ockhamist scholasticism. We have seen that this philosophy left a large place in the religious life for personal experiences of a mystical sort and that it often stimulated a spirit of skepticism (see page 620). At the same time Luther read the works of St. Augustine and those of several mystical writers, among them St. Bernard and various Germans of the fourteenth century. Though he had seen little of the humanists at Erfurt, he had read the Latin classics there and had even learned a little Greek. Later he became acquainted with the writings of Erasmus, Lefèvre d'Étaples, and other Christian humanists, but from the first he was somewhat repelled by their coldly rationalistic approach to religion.

Being a model monk, Luther quickly attracted the notice of the vicar of his order, Johann von Staupitz, who was a man much interested in raising standards in the monasteries committed to his care. Shortly after Luther had been ordained priest (1507), Staupitz sent him to the new and small university at Wittenberg, in Saxony, where he lectured for a year on philosophy (1508–1509). In 1510 he paid a brief visit to Rome and, after receiving a doctor's degree from Erfurt in 1512, he became subprior of the Augustinian monastery at Witten-

*Luther as
a professor
and
preacher*



berg and a professor at the university there—which latter post he held until his death in 1546. During his early years at Wittenberg Luther built up a reputation as a scholar and as a popular preacher.

**His
spiritual
struggles**

But though advancing rapidly in his profession, Luther was not a happy man. From childhood he had been devout and pious, but like many another in those cruel times, he deeply feared the God whom he imagined to be a merciless tyrant, malicious and capricious, and he trembled at the thought of hellfire. Until his dying day Luther believed firmly in the devil as a real and ever present enemy, seeking his destruction. As a young monk he was obsessed by a consciousness of sin—not so much of specific misdoings or imperfections on his own part as of sin in general—and though, in his ardent seeking after forgiveness, or “justification,” he zealously performed all the penances prescribed by the church, they brought him no relief. In later years he used to say, with considerable exaggeration no doubt, that his fastings, vigils, and flagellations brought him almost to death’s door. In those dark days the sympathy of Staupitz was his sole comfort, and he once remarked that without this friend he would surely have “sunk into hell.” But one day (about 1514) when he was reflecting upon the words in St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans “The just shall live by faith,” he came to the momentous conclusion that “faith” (confidence in God’s mercy, as shown in the Gospels) rather than “good works” (penances, pilgrimages, alms, the veneration of relics, and the like) would bring the forgiveness and assurance of salvation that he so ardently sought. He then found inward peace.

**“Justifica-
tion by
faith”**

Thus was born the fundamental Protestant doctrine of “justification by faith.” The doctrine was not new, for several orthodox Catholic theologians had expressed rather similar ideas, and Lefèvre and others were saying much the same thing at that very time, but Luther was as yet unacquainted with their writings. Luther’s most important contribution, perhaps, was his insistence that absolutions, indulgences, and the whole ecclesiastical machinery connected with the sacrament of penance were not only superfluous but worthless. He taught “justification by faith *alone*,” and he clearly stated the essential features of his doctrine in sermons and university lectures between 1515 and 1517.

**Luther
the man**

In spite of his piety and his inward struggles, Luther was not an austere or ascetic person. On the contrary, he was most sociable and always a good companion, full of life and humor. From childhood he had been a talented musician, and in later years he composed words

and music for many famous hymns, notably the one beginning *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* ("A mighty fortress is our God"). Luther was also one of the great masters of German prose, as is shown by his magnificent translation of the Bible. But he was not like the Christian humanists whose ideas he so often shared. For him the question of faith and works was not merely a matter for academic debate by the theologians. A tensely emotional and even passionate man, and a high idealist heedless of his own personal safety, Luther insisted that if the church's teaching about indulgences was wrong, the public should be informed of the fact at once. He was an inspired prophet, not a scholar or a politician, and when he could no longer remain silent, he attacked the doctrine of indulgences with all the courage and steadfastness for which he is so justly famous.

The Ninety-Five Theses

Luther's opportunity soon arose. As early as 1506 Pope Julius II had authorized the sale of indulgences in Germany to help defray the cost of St. Peter's Church, and eight years later the situation was worsened when Leo X appointed Albert of Brandenburg archbishop of Mainz. As this young prelate already held two rich bishoprics, he needed a special dispensation, for which Leo charged him 1079 ducats—a sum whose metallic value was about \$25,000 but whose purchasing value equaled that of several times that many dollars today. To recoup himself, Albert was permitted to sell the indulgences at a large profit to himself, and as he had borrowed most of the money from the Fuggers, a representative of the bank accompanied each salesman to pocket half the price of the indulgence as soon as it was sold. Though these unedifying details were concealed from the public, the ensuing high-pressure sales campaign aroused much indignation throughout Germany. In the vicinity of Wittenberg the indulgences were hawked about by a Dominican friar named Tetzel, an experienced and successful salesman who was not overly scrupulous in describing the merits of his wares. He would guarantee, it was alleged, that if one of his indulgences were bought for a departed friend, the soul of the deceased would "leap from purgatory at the very moment that the coin tinkles in the bag."

Under ordinary circumstances a university professor might have paid little attention to the activities of an itinerant friar, but Luther decided to make an issue of the matter. On October 31, 1517, there-

**Sale of
indulgences**

**Luther's
theses
(1517)**

fore, he nailed to the church door in Wittenberg a list (in Latin) of ninety-five points on which he believed the teaching or the practice of the church regarding indulgences to be in error. The posting of these "Ninety-Five Theses" is usually taken as the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

Germany
in an
uproar

Luther's bold act at once threw all Germany into an uproar. The Ninety-Five Theses, translated into German and printed, were soon known from one end of the country to the other. At Rome, however, authorities refused to take the matter seriously. It is alleged that Leo dismissed it from his mind with the jocose remark that it was "another quarrel of monks." Not until a year later was he prevailed upon to send a cardinal to Germany to demand haughtily that Luther retract his statements. When the two men met at Augsburg, Luther refused to retract anything. He thus defied the pope himself in the person of his legate.

The Leipzig
debate

Shortly thereafter the Dominicans, still smarting under the ridicule heaped upon them in the *Letters of Obscure Men* and angered by the vehemence with which Luther annihilated a reply to his theses published by Tetzel, put forward their ablest controversialist, Johann von Eck, to confute Luther. At Leipzig, in July, 1519, the two men held a formal debate lasting eighteen days. Eck easily showed himself to be the more skillful debater, but his forensic victory was an empty one. When forced to admit that certain of his doctrines resembled those taught by the Bohemian heretic John Huss, Luther unfalteringly replied that both the pope and the Council of Constance had erred in condemning Huss. After he had thus impugned the church's two supreme authorities—pope and council—Luther insisted that only the Bible might be taken as the word of God or an infallible guide to theological truth. He thus proclaimed the second fundamental doctrine characteristic of Protestantism.

Luther's
three
tracts

The debate at Leipzig showed clearly that Luther was not an orthodox Catholic (which he had claimed to be), and during the next few weeks theological faculties at Cologne and elsewhere declared his doctrines to be heretical. Undaunted, Luther set to work clarifying his position on a number of points, studying Huss, and writing three famous pamphlets which he published in 1520. The first, written in German, was entitled *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, concerning the Reform of Christian Society*. Starting with the Hussite theory of "the priesthood of all believers," Luther here attacked the pope and the Catholic clergy with great vigor, and he called upon the

Christian people of Germany to hold a council that would reform the church from top to bottom. The second pamphlet, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, written in Latin but soon translated into German, attacked the church's sacramental system, alleging that at least four of the seven sacraments were not to be found in the Gospels or the primitive church. Here again the influence of Huss and Wycliffe was very evident, and here are to be found some of Luther's most telling blows against the Catholic Church. The Latin tract *On Christian Liberty* was shorter than the others (about thirty pages as opposed to about eighty for each of the others), and in it Luther developed his ideas concerning freedom from the necessity for "good works."

Meantime Eck and the Dominicans had been pressing Leo X for action against the heretic, and on June 15, 1520, the pope signed a bull (*Exsurge Domine*) ordering him to recant within sixty days or be excommunicated. The document did not reach Germany until late in September, and on Christmas Day, 1520, Luther publicly burned it before the city gates of Wittenberg. A few days later, on January 3, the pope formally excommunicated him. By this time Luther had won such a following in all classes of German society that, when church authorities demanded his arrest, the Holy Roman Emperor (Charles V) dared not comply. Instead, he ordered Luther to appear before a diet (parliament of princes) to be held at Worms in April. Luther was given a safe-conduct, and though warned by his friends that a similar guarantee had not protected Huss from the stake, he resolutely appeared before the diet. Again he refused to retract anything, proclaimed the sole authority of the Bible, and closed his remarks with a stirring appeal to the rights of each individual's conscience.

Charles V declared Luther an outlaw on May 26, 1521, but agents of Frederick "the Wise" of Saxony (1486-1525), Luther's ruler, had already kidnaped him and carried him to safety in the Wartburg Castle, not far from Eisenach. Here Luther remained in hiding for several months, working on his translation of the Bible and engaging in a constant battle with the devil. (On one occasion, legend tells us, he even hurled an ink bottle straight through His Satanic Majesty.) As soon as he deemed it safe to return to Wittenberg, Luther resumed his teaching and continued the translation, but the dramatic part of his career was now over. The remaining twenty-five years of his life he spent training disciples, quarreling with Catholics and rival

**Luther
excom-
municated**

**Luther's
later
career**

reformers, and organizing the Lutheran Church. In 1525 he married a former nun, Katharina von Bora, who bore him five children.

Lutheranism in Germany

Other reformers

Soon after Luther nailed his famous theses to the church door at Wittenberg, popular preachers of every hue began expressing new views on religion openly, and hundreds of controversial pamphlets poured from the printing presses. Some writers went much further than Luther along the path he had broken, and a few must be mentioned briefly.

Philip Melanch- thon

Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), a nephew of the great Reuchlin and a well-trained humanist, became professor of Greek at Wittenberg (1518), where he was soon won over to Luther's cause. He became one of the reformer's staunchest friends and ablest assistants. His vast learning, his moderate temper, and his care for detail proved invaluable supplements to Luther's prophetic enthusiasm. As early as 1521 Melanchthon published a treatise setting forth the new theology in systematic form, and in later years he became the formal theologian of Lutheranism.

Karlstadt

A more radical reformer was Andreas Bodenstein (c. 1480–1541), ordinarily known as Karlstadt from his native village. A learned man, trained at Erfurt and Cologne and professor of philosophy at Wittenberg since 1504, Karlstadt shared Luther's views as early as 1516, assisted him during the Leipzig debate, and assumed leadership of the reformers while Luther was at the Wartburg. Going further than Luther, he attacked the whole monastic system and, after denouncing the celibacy of the clergy, became the first of the reforming clergy to marry (1522). Later he attacked the doctrine of transubstantiation, quarreled with Luther, and became a professor and preacher at Basel (1534).

Ulrich Zwingli

The Swiss reformer Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) had received an excellent humanistic education before he was appointed preacher at Zurich (1518), and in his criticisms of the church he went far beyond Luther. He taught that the Mass is merely a memorial of Christ's Last Supper, not a sacrifice for the remission of sins; he ordered all altars and images removed from churches; and he conducted his simple services in German only. These reforms alienated many conservative people, and when the peasants of the central Swiss cantons

rebelled against them, Zwingli took the field with troops raised in Zurich and was killed in battle.

Meantime the growing spirit of rebellion had overflowed into fields other than religion. For many years the peasants of Germany had been restless, with minor revolts here and there, and with more serious uprisings in Württemberg (1514) and Baden (1517). Then, in 1524–1525, the whole of south and central Germany was engulfed in a tremendous rebellion. Similar peasant outbreaks had accompanied the decline of feudalism everywhere, but the great German revolt was encouraged and embittered by the religious controversy. One of its principal leaders was a radical reformer named Thomas Münzer (c. 1489–1525). The peasants were defeated in battle; Münzer was captured and beheaded (May, 1525); and the peasants were repressed with great vindictiveness.

This peasant revolt marked an important stage in Luther's career. He had always insisted that a Christian should obey the magistrates, and as early as 1522 he expelled Münzer from Wittenberg, where he had begun preaching while Luther was at the Wartburg. Now he turned upon the peasants with extreme bitterness, partly perhaps because they invoked his name and example. He frantically encouraged the nobles to strike down the rebels. Thereafter Luther seemed to lose something of his old idealistic enthusiasm, until he eventually became a rather bitter old man, railing at the pope and many others, but no longer preaching Christian liberty as in the glorious days of his youth.

Luther's denunciation of the peasants naturally endeared him to the princes and landowners of Germany, who were already among his more ardent champions. They were moved partly by religion and partly by politics and economics. The young and ambitious emperor, Charles V (1519–1556), was just then attempting to strengthen the Holy Roman Empire by curbing these princes, and they, in turn, were struggling to maintain their "liberty" against him. Charles, on the other hand, had planned to exploit religion as a bond uniting his huge empire, and Luther's attacks upon the church endangered this program. He therefore outlawed the heretic almost as soon as he had been excommunicated (1521). As we have seen, however, Frederick of Saxony defied Charles, and other Germany princes likewise befriended Luther as part of their political campaign against the emperor. Had it not been for this princely aid, Luther would undoubtedly have followed Huss to the stake soon after his excommunication.

**The
Peasants'
Revolt
(1525)**

**Luther's
denuncia-
tion of the
peasants**

**German
princes'
support of
Luther**

**Church
lands
secularized**

Moreover, the princes soon began "purifying" the church by relieving it of its surplus wealth, above all by confiscating—or, as they preferred to say, by "secularizing"—church lands. In some cases princely bishops or abbots renounced allegiance to the pope but kept the property of their dioceses or monasteries for themselves. As kings and princes had often "purified" the church in this manner since the time when Philip IV of France despoiled the Knights Templar (1308), there was nothing particularly new or Protestant about such a procedure. Nevertheless, many German princes, having enriched themselves at the church's expense, tended thereafter to view religion through the reformers' eyes. It thus came about that Lutheranism was championed by the German princes while the educated burghers of the south German cities often turned to such humanistic reformers as Zwingli.

**Catholic
revival**

Most people retained the old ideal of church unity, however, and as the Catholics could play off the followers of Luther against those of Karlstadt or Zwingli, and denounce the excesses of such radicals as Münzer, they regained some of their earlier losses. In general the Catholics preferred the Lutherans to the other reformers and even made advances toward them. Melancthon was not averse to compromise, but Luther stood adamant. During these years, however, the emperor was so deeply engaged in wars with France, and the pope was so overwhelmed with troubles in Italy (Rome itself was sacked by imperial troops in 1527), that they could find little time for religious negotiations in Germany.

**Augsburg
Confession**

Charles eventually made peace with France in 1529 and turned his attention to the German troubles. The emboldened Catholics, at a diet held in Speyer, demanded that the Edict of Worms (outlawing Luther and prohibiting his books) be enforced, and when Luther's followers "protested" against such action, they won for themselves the nickname "Protestant." Charles then asked the reformers for statements of their beliefs. Three creeds were presented at the diet of Augsburg in 1530, one by Zwingli, one by the reformers in four south German cities, and the famous Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans. The latter, largely the work of Melancthon, was a moderate statement that Charles thought might serve as the basis of discussion. It was wholly unacceptable to the Catholics, however, and later it was regarded as an authoritative statement of Lutheran belief. When the negotiations failed, the Protestant princes of Germany united for mutual protection, and as Charles's attention was distracted almost at

once by Turkish attacks in Austria, the Protestants exercised their religion freely for the next fifteen years.

When Charles again found himself free to pursue his ambition of imposing political and religious unity upon Germany, he went to war with the Protestant princes (1546). After his early successes had been nullified by several defeats, he finally signed the Peace of Augsburg in 1555. This treaty permitted each German prince to choose between Catholicism and Lutheranism (but not other forms of Protestantism) and required subjects to accept the religion of their prince's choice. This general principle was neatly expressed in the Latin phrase *Cuius regio, eius religio* ("Whose the region, his the religion"). In general, the princes of central, northern, and eastern Germany, and Württemberg, chose Lutheranism while those of the Rhine Valley and southern Germany remained Catholics. The Treaty of Augsburg brought Germany several years of religious truce.

**Peace of
Augsburg
(1555)**

The Lutheran Church

Martin Luther died on February 18, 1546, and was buried in state at Wittenberg, near the church to whose door he had once nailed the Ninety-Five Theses. At the time of his death he was the recognized leader of the "Evangelical" party, which was clearly distinct from the Catholic Church on the one hand and from the "Reformed" party (Zwinglians and, later, Calvinists) on the other. Luther always held fast to his belief that the truth would prevail if everyone studied the Bible carefully, but he also recognized the power of preaching, and at Wittenberg he and his associates trained hundreds of Evangelical preachers. Similar doctrines were taught at other universities, but Wittenberg remained the intellectual center of Lutheranism. In fact, Lutheranism could almost be defined as the religion taught at Wittenberg.

**Wittenberg
the
Lutheran
capital**

Controversy with Catholic and Reformed leaders made it clear to Lutheran leaders that some standard of orthodoxy was necessary—especially after the Treaty of Augsburg permitted princes to establish Evangelical but not Reformed churches. The Augsburg Confession came to fill this function. The Protestant princes appointed "consistories," or committees of clergy and laymen, to guard the Lutheran orthodoxy of the churches in their states, but there was no single organization embracing all Evangelical Christians. The consistory became an important body ruling the churches of a principality, but it always remained under the thumb of the secular prince.

**Lutheran
church
government**

**Lutheran-
ism
outside
Germany**

We have already seen that there was great dissatisfaction with the Catholic Church in other countries than Germany, and that everywhere reformers were trying to purify it. Many such reformers took a lively interest in Luther's writings, and some even studied under him at Wittenberg. In the early 1520's Charles V punished several persons for teaching Lutheranism in Holland, and late in the same decade Lutheranism was accepted in Scandinavia. The Scandinavian countries had been prepared for the new religion only by a little humanism and by the studies of a few clergymen at Wittenberg. The change was made by decrees of the kings, who thus anticipated the procedure that was standardized by the Peace of Augsburg and who quickly sealed their conversion to Protestantism by "secularizing" all the church lands. In Bohemia the followers of John Huss were still the dominant party, but both Evangelical and Reformed ideas made rapid progress there, until in the second half of the century they won the majority of the population. The commander of the Teutonic Knights accepted Lutheranism in 1525, thereby identifying Lutheranism with Germanism in the Baltic States but also forcing the Poles deeper into Catholicism. In the early days, however, many Polish nobles took an interest in the new ideas, and a few Lutheran churches appeared. Likewise some of the German groups in Hungary accepted Lutheranism. Within a few years of Luther's death Lutheranism had reached its present frontiers in Europe. Except in Bohemia, which later was forcibly reconverted to Catholicism (see page 764), neither Catholics nor Evangelicals have since made noteworthy gains at the expense of the other party.

THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

**Antipapal
agitation
in England**

At the beginning of the sixteenth century England was almost as well prepared as Germany for sweeping changes in religion. Strong antipapal feeling had been shown in the statutes of Provisors (1351) and Praemunire (1353; see page 615), and in more recent times there had been much criticism of papal taxation and papal interference in English affairs. The Tudor dynasty, which came into power with Henry VII in 1485, was committed to a policy of royal absolutism, and its plans for a strong national state required the subordination of the church to the king. At the same time Lollards (followers of Wycliffe) were still numerous among the lower classes, in spite of vigorous efforts to stamp out the heresy, including the statute *De haeretico*

comburendo (1401). (A popular legend later reported that Archbishop Arundel, the instigator of this infamous law, was struck dumb for thus hindering the preaching of the word of God.) From time to time a few Lollards were burned at the stake, even in the days of Henry VIII, but the heresy continued to attract many persons. In the first ten years after 1517, orthodox English bishops feared Lollardy far more than they feared Lutheranism.

Ever since the days of Chaucer, educated Englishmen had been speaking bitterly of indulgences, and now Christian humanists such as Colet and Erasmus were the intellectual leaders of Oxford and Cambridge, training the young men who were presently to establish Protestantism in England. Among these young men was William Tyndale (c. 1492–1536). Reviving Wycliffe's idea that all men should read the Bible in their native tongue, he decided to make a fresh translation directly from the Greek and Hebrew. His New Testament was ready in 1524, but when the bishops prevented publication in England, Tyndale went to Germany. Here he met Luther at Wittenberg, and though his translation was printed at Worms (1526), most copies were destroyed by the English authorities. Tyndale had by this time accepted Zwingli's theology, and during the next several years he lived in hiding on the Continent, publishing tracts on theology and working at his translation of the Old Testament. Before his task was completed, however, he was arrested and burned at the stake in Belgium (1536). Tyndale was a man of high scholarship and great literary talent, and many of the felicitous turns of phrase in his translation of the New Testament are preserved in the King James Version of 1611.

**William
Tyndale**

In England, as everywhere else, the actual course of the Reformation was determined in considerable measure by the secular rulers, in this case by Henry VIII, Mary, and Elizabeth. When Henry (1491–1547) came to the throne in 1509, he was a good-looking, affable, athletic, and intelligent young man of eighteen, interested in the new humanism, the new absolutism, and everything else that was new. He was extremely popular with all classes of society, and everyone expected great things from him. As he was the second son of Henry VII, he did not become heir apparent until the death (in 1502) of his elder brother, Arthur. Before this tragedy, his father had planned that Henry should become archbishop of Canterbury, thereby uniting church and state in a family compact. The young boy was therefore given a theological education, and all his life Henry remained proud of his prowess as an orthodox theologian. When Luther

Henry VIII



HENRY VIII, Painting by Holbein. (Corsini Palace, Rome)

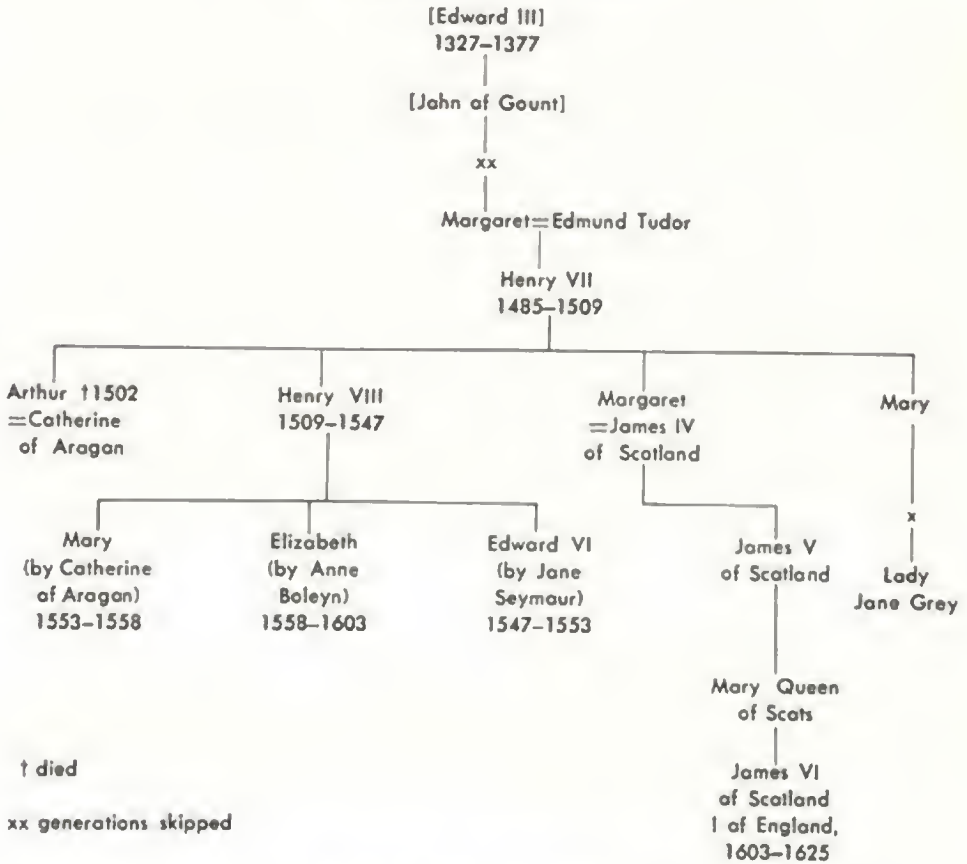
published his *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, Henry replied personally with a Latin tract entitled *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* (1521). As a reward, Pope Leo X conferred upon Henry the title "Defensor Fidei"—"Defender of the Faith"—which is still part of the official title of British sovereigns.

During his early years as king, Henry devoted himself especially to sports, to the new learning, and to wars in France. The government of the kingdom was therefore left largely to his astute and able chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, a true Renaissance churchman who lived in extravagant style and hoped some day to become pope. By 1527, however, the king was more anxious to rule, and in that year great

Catherine
of Aragon

changes began. First of all came the matter of the king's divorce. Shortly before his death, Arthur had married Catherine of Aragon, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella, thereby uniting England and Spain in a family alliance. When Arthur died, Ferdinand insisted that the alliance be reaffirmed by the marriage of Henry to Catherine.

THE TUDOR KINGS OF ENGLAND



This marriage finally took place a few days after Henry's coronation in 1509. But as the Book of Leviticus, in the Old Testament, specifically forbade a man to marry his brother's widow, doubts as to the legality of this marriage were expressed at the time, even though Pope Julius II had granted a dispensation authorizing the union. During the next several years Catherine bore Henry six children, five of whom died in infancy, thus leaving Mary (b. 1516) as

his sole heir. By 1527 it was fairly certain that Catherine (who was six years older than her husband) would have no more children, and many persons besides Henry began fearing that if the kingdom were left to a woman, civil war would result. The situation was then greatly complicated by the arrival at court of a young lady-in-waiting, Anne Boleyn, with whom Henry fell in love. Recalling the old doubts about the lawfulness of his marriage to Catherine, Henry now ordered Wolsey to procure an annulment and prepared to marry Anne (1527).

**Divorce
proceedings**

The reigning pope, Clement VII, a member of the Medici family, would undoubtedly have been glad to favor a friend, had he been a free agent, but unfortunately Clement was not free. In that very year the imperial armies of Charles V had sacked Rome, and ten days later the Medici were for the second time expelled from Florence. Charles V, a nephew of Catherine of Aragon, opposed the annulment, not for love of his aunt's honor, but because he foresaw the possibility of adding England to his vast domains when his cousin Mary became its queen. Caught in this predicament, Clement played for time, hoping that Henry's passion for Anne would cool. Negotiations regarding the divorce were dragged out through 1528, but in 1529 Charles signed a treaty with the pope promising to restore the Medici to Florence if the pope refused the divorce. Clement thereupon recalled his emissary from England. Various other vain efforts were made to secure an annulment, until at last Henry, losing patience, married Anne (January, 1533). The archbishop of Canterbury had declared the marriage to Catherine null and void, but the pope excommunicated Henry. After a few months Anne gave birth to a daughter, later Queen Elizabeth. Before long, however, Anne was accused of adultery, convicted, and beheaded (1536). The next day Henry married his third wife, Jane Seymour, who bore him a son, later Edward VI, and died shortly thereafter (1537). In later years Henry married three other wives, making a total of six.

**Reformation
Parliament
(1529-
1536)**

Anne Boleyn was not the sole cause of Henry's troubles. Like his father before him, Henry tried to govern without parliament, and that body met only once during Wolsey's long chancellorship. In 1529, however, Wolsey fell from power, nominally because of his failure to secure the annulment, actually because he could no longer stave off bankruptcy. Wars with France had eaten up the huge treasure accumulated by Henry VII, prices of everything were rising rapidly, new wars threatened, and only parliament could impose new taxes. Soon after Wolsey's fall, therefore, Henry summoned a new

parliament to meet in November, 1529. This was the famous "Reformation Parliament," which sat for seven years and is usually considered one of the most important parliaments in English history. Several of its acts reformed the church and religion while others strengthened the royal power.

At the same time several new ministers came into power. Sir Thomas More became chancellor in Wolsey's place, but he held office for only two years. Thereafter Henry's chief assistant was a man named Thomas Cromwell (c. 1485-1540). The son of a blacksmith, Cromwell had spent his youth wandering about the Continent as a mercenary soldier; he later became Wolsey's chief assistant; and he now served Henry with the same intelligence, zeal, and unscrupulousness. It is said that he, more than any other one man, changed England from a feudal to a bureaucratic monarchy.

**Thomas
Cromwell**

Another new man of this time was Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556), a graduate of Cambridge. He had long been interested in the new learning and in Luther's ideas but, being of a gentle and scholarly temperament, he was not the man to resist the strong-willed Henry. He first attracted the king's attention in 1529, he became archbishop of Canterbury in 1533 (his appointment being confirmed by the pope), and he officiated at Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. He contributed greatly to the cause of the Reformation in England, guiding it in a middle course between Romanism and the radical Protestantism of the Continent.

**Thomas
Cranmer**

Protestant England

The Reformation Parliament (1529-1536) had been called primarily for financial rather than religious reasons, and there is no evidence that Henry made special efforts to secure a house that would support him in his controversy with the pope. Nevertheless, the new parliament presently showed a strong antipapal bias. Its members, like all Englishmen, were enthusiastic about Henry; they were nationalistic and patriotic; they resented papal taxation and papal interference in English affairs; and they sincerely deplored the many abuses in the church. Yet at first they limited their ecclesiastical legislation to very minor reforms. In 1532, however, after Henry had eased his financial difficulties somewhat by inflicting an enormous fine upon the clergy for alleged violation of law, parliament passed the Act of Annates, which forbade church officials to give part of their

**An
antipapal
parliament**

salaries to the pope. We have seen that this abuse was being denounced everywhere, and the English were not the first to legislate against it, but the act was important as a harbinger of more to come.

**The breach
with Rome**

During the next two years, 1533–1534, a series of fundamental acts completely severed the English church from Rome. One act forbade judicial appeals to the pope; a second prohibited the payment of taxes to Rome and denied to papal agents any power or authority in England; a third deprived the clergy of all power of legislation on ecclesiastical matters; another vested in the king the right to appoint all bishops and abbots; and still another settled the succession to the throne on the heirs of Anne Boleyn. Most significant of all was the Act of Supremacy (1534), which declared the king to be “the only supreme head in earth of the Church of England.”

**Execution
of Fisher
and More**

These various acts were passed with surprisingly little opposition, either in parliament or from the general public. A number of friars and a few others were arrested for refusing to take an oath to support the acts of Supremacy and Succession. As a warning to others, a few were executed on charges of treason. Among those beheaded were John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More. More had resigned the chancellorship in 1532 because of Henry’s attack upon the clergy, and in 1535 he went to the block rather than accept the Act of Supremacy. Just four hundred years later he was declared a saint by the Roman Catholic Church (1935).

**Monastery
lands**

But Henry found no real answer to his financial difficulties until Cromwell’s vigilant eye chanced to fall upon the monasteries. If their enormous wealth could be “secularized,” the state might once more become solvent. Recalling the frequent complaints about monastic corruption, Cromwell sent out “visitors” in 1535 to investigate conditions in the monasteries. Of course the visitors found what they were sent to find, and Cromwell professed to be deeply shocked. The matter was laid before parliament (1536), which straightway enacted a series of laws suppressing the monasteries and confiscating their lands. The smaller establishments went first, but the largest were dissolved in 1539. Part of the property thus acquired was used to pension the older monks, part was wasted preparing for a threatened war with France that never came, part went into the treasury, and a large part was given to Henry’s new friends and supporters. Henry thus created a new nobility with whose aid he could resist attacks by the old aristocracy.

For a moment it seemed that Henry might need the active aid of his new friends at once. The general public had shown little opposition to the reforms of 1533–1534, but attacks upon the monasteries and shrines touched people more intimately and aroused greater popular hostility. Many monasteries had been active in caring for the poor of the neighborhood, and the larger ones employed hundreds of laymen. The old nobility, thoroughly frightened by the rapid progress of the royal absolutism that was constantly depriving them of time-honored rights, united with the champions of the old church to resist further encroachments. (In Germany, it will be recalled, the corresponding social class had turned to Protestantism for precisely the same reason.) People everywhere were suffering from rising prices, for which churchmen and nobles put the blame on Henry. (The real cause was financial inflation, brought partly by debasement of the coinage and partly by Spain's huge importations of American gold and silver; see page 733.) These various forces brought increasing discontent, which presently took form in the "Pilgrimage of Grace" (1536). Several thousand persons in northern England rose in a rebellion that momentarily threatened the Tudor regime. The rebels were badly led and quickly suppressed, however, and no further armed resistance was offered to Henry's reforms.

*Rising
discontent*

Meantime Protestant ideas, entering England from the Continent, had begun to mingle with those emanating from Lollardy and the Christian humanists. Cranmer had been interested in Luther while still at Cambridge, and in 1532 he married the daughter of a prominent Lutheran whom he met while on a diplomatic mission to Germany. When Tyndale was being tried at Brussels (1536), Cranmer persuaded Cromwell to make vain efforts to save the heretic, who ten years before had been driven from England. Two years later, again at Cranmer's behest, Cromwell ordered that every parish church in England should have a large Bible so placed that all who wished might read it. (Bibles were still far too expensive for common people to buy.) The volumes thus placed in churches were copies of the "Great Bible" or "Cranmer's Bible"—a completion and revision of Tyndale's translation. By this time Cranmer had abandoned transubstantiation and other fundamental Catholic doctrines, while other English theologians were departing even farther from orthodoxy.

*Cranmer
and
Protestant
theology*

Worried by this theological radicalism, Henry had parliament declare, in the "Six Articles" (1539), that various old practices and doctrines, including transubstantiation and the celibacy of the clergy,

*The "Six
Articles"*

were to be accepted by the Church of England. Cranmer opposed this measure in vain, but a year later he aided Cromwell in procuring the marriage of Henry to a German Lutheran princess, Anne of Cleves. To encourage this marriage, which he considered of high political importance, Cromwell commissioned the painter Hans Holbein to make a portrait of Anne that did her more than justice. Henry was bitterly disappointed when his bride arrived, yet he went through with the marriage ceremony. Almost immediately, however, he divorced Anne—and ordered Cromwell beheaded (1540).

*Henry's
last years*

Henry continued to rule for almost seven years, but his great days were now over. During these last years he married two more wives, Catherine Howard, whom he presently had beheaded for infidelity, and Catherine Parr, who survived him by several years. In spite of his ridiculous marriages, Henry was one of England's greatest kings. Without a civil war he effected a fundamental revolution in politics, religion, economics, and society, and to the very end he was admired and loved by the overwhelming majority of his subjects.

Edward VI

When Henry died (January 28, 1547), he left a will directing that the crown pass to his son Edward and, if Edward should die without issue, to his daughters Mary and Elizabeth in turn, and finally to his niece, Lady Jane Grey. Edward VI was only ten years old when he came to the throne, he was in bad health, and he died six years later (July 6, 1553). Throughout his reign, therefore, England was ruled by a council presided over at first by his uncle, the duke of Somerset, and after 1549 by John Dudley, duke of Northumberland. Henry's political and religious policies were continued in a more extreme form. Cranmer remained archbishop of Canterbury, securing the repeal of the Six Articles and steering the church into a more Protestant course. An Act of Uniformity (1549) required that all church services should be in English and should conform to the ritual set forth in Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer. With only slight modifications this ritual is still used in the Church of England and (with a few more changes) in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Two years later Cranmer issued the "Forty-Two Articles," setting forth the doctrine of the English church in moderate Protestant terms. During these six years, moreover, many advanced Protestants from the Continent visited England, where they were allowed to preach their new doctrines.

*Queen
Mary*

Edward's will named Lady Jane Grey as his heir, and Northumberland (her father-in-law) tried to make her queen. After nine days,

however, she was arrested with her husband and Northumberland, and eventually she was executed. Her failure to secure the throne was due, not to a popular desire for a Catholic ruler, but to the continuing power of Henry's popularity. The governing classes and the people preferred Mary, the daughter of Henry and Catherine of Aragon, who followed her father's policies in everything except religion. Being a fanatical Catholic, she devoted the five years of her reign to frantic efforts to restore the old religion in England. Those who had acquired monastery lands were guaranteed their possessions, but Henry's other anti-Catholic measures were repealed. Protestant bishops were replaced with Catholics, and late in 1554 Cardinal Reginald Pole formally absolved England of heresy, thereby receiving her back into the Catholic fold. Then followed four years of heartless persecution which won for the queen her unenviable nickname, "Bloody Mary." About three hundred Protestants were burned at the stake, chief of them being Cranmer himself. Serious and respectable persons stood aghast, whether their sympathies were Protestant or Catholic, and Mary's fanaticism rendered Catholicism more odious than ever. Mary was unwise or unfortunate in other ways as well. She married Philip II of Spain, who was highly unpopular in England; she lost Calais, England's last outpost on the Continent; and to her great grief she had no children. She died on November 17, 1558.

Elizabeth succeeded to the throne without serious opposition. Though raised a Protestant, she was not a person of deep religious feeling, and she viewed ecclesiastical matters largely through the eyes of a politician. Within a short time Mary's Catholic legislation was repealed and most of Henry's laws were reenacted. A new Act of Supremacy declared Elizabeth the "Supreme Governor" of the Church of England (1559), and an Act of Uniformity brought back Cranmer's prayer book. The "Forty-Two Articles" were reduced to thirty-nine, which were carefully arranged to appeal to a wide variety of persons—to all except the most extreme Protestants and also to Catholics who would renounce the pope, transubstantiation, purgatory, and a few other doctrines. These "Thirty-Nine Articles" have remained the basis of Anglican theology almost to the present day. Out of some ten thousand clergymen in England, nearly all of whom had called themselves Catholics in the days of Mary, less than two hundred refused to accept this Elizabethan settlement. At the same time, countless Protestants who had fled to the Continent under Mary, and had there imbibed new doctrines, now returned to England, where most of them ac-

*Queen
Elizabeth I*

cepted the new regime. Englishmen were not yet through fighting about religion—in fact, the worst was yet to come—but the long battle entered a new phase under Elizabeth.

CALVIN AND CALVINISM

Early
French
reformers

Long before Luther launched his attack upon indulgences, many Frenchmen had been anxious to reform their church. They talked about justification by faith, they urged a return to apostolic Christianity, and later they studied the writings of Luther and other German reformers. Even Francis I was reputed to be sympathetic to the new ideas, and his sister, Marguerite of Navarre, was openly so. Church authorities charged several persons with heresy during the decade of the 1520's, and a few were burned at the stake, but French Protestantism lacked a leader until the appearance of John Calvin (1509–1564).

John Calvin

Calvin was born at Noyon, in northeastern France, the son of an attorney employed by the local bishop. As the father intended his son to become a priest, the boy was sent to Paris, where he entered the Collège de Montaigu. When the father changed his mind, young Calvin studied law in Orléans. Though Calvin disliked the law, these studies gave his mind a strong legal cast, which it retained throughout his life. After taking his law degree, he returned to Paris, where he studied Greek and Hebrew and wrote a book about the pagan philosopher Seneca (1532). A year later the young man was converted to Protestantism. Being only twenty-three at the time, Calvin belonged to a generation that accepted Protestantism without first passing several adult years in the Catholic Church. Age and training thus prepared him to carry Protestant ideas to their logical conclusion.

Institutes
of the
Christian
Religion

Not long after Calvin's conversion, Francis I became more severe toward Protestants (partly perhaps because of Protestant excesses at Münster; see below, page 701), and twice Calvin was arrested. In 1535 he fled to Basel, where he published the first edition of his great work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536). This Latin treatise of over five hundred pages presented a complete Protestant theology, systematically arranged, and buttressed with powerful logic. It was addressed to the learned world, but five years later Calvin published a French translation. Throughout his life he kept working at this book, adding details but withdrawing little or nothing, until the last Latin edition (1559) was more than twice the size of the first.



CALVIN, Painting by Cranach. (Bettmann Archive)

This book remained the authoritative statement of Calvinistic theology, and few theological books exercised a deeper influence upon the thinking of the next three centuries. When we recall that Calvin completed it at the age of twenty-six, we appreciate his youthful genius.

Late in 1536 Calvin visited Geneva in Switzerland. Here he became assistant to an old friend from Paris, Guillaume Farel, who was pastor of the Protestant church. Several months later the two Frenchmen quarreled with their Swiss colleagues and were banished from Geneva, but their departure was followed by civil discord and Catholic attempts to regain the city. Calvin wrote the Genevans a famous letter, admirably defending the Protestant cause, and in 1541 he was recalled.

**Guillaume
Farel**

**Calvin at
Geneva**

Geneva, then a city of about seven thousand inhabitants, had once been a possession of the Italian duke of Savoy, but a few years before Calvin's first arrival the citizens had ejected the duke's representative along with the Catholic bishop. The city therefore needed a civil government as well as a spiritual leader, and Calvin undertook to provide both. His ideal state, like that of Savonarola fifty years before, was a Christian theocracy, ruled by the clergy, who interpreted and proclaimed the laws of God. Both leaders were austere and puritanical men, much given to "blue laws," but Calvin succeeded in Geneva where his predecessor had failed in Florence. Though holding no official position except that of preacher, Calvin was virtually dictator at Geneva for the remainder of his life.

**His
enormous
labors**

In addition to his tasks as civil and spiritual leader of Geneva, Calvin accomplished an enormous amount of work. He preached about two hundred long sermons a year, he wrote detailed commentaries on all the books of the Bible, he maintained a huge correspondence with important people all over Europe (it now fills eleven of the fifty-nine large volumes of his collected works), he engaged in countless controversies with rival theologians, he was the principal professor in a school for training Protestant clergymen, he was the recognized leader of the Reformed church throughout Europe, and he was always in bad health, suffering from gallstones, asthma, and gout. Toward the end of his life he once complained, we are told, that he had suffered from headache continuously for the past twenty years! Completely worn out at last, he died on May 27, 1564, aged fifty-five years.

**Calvin's
theology
accepted**

Though Calvin owed much to Luther, he owed more to Zwingli and his disciples. Where these men differed from Luther, Calvin usually took the Zwinglian side. It might be said, therefore, that he completed the work of Zwingli. The Swiss Protestants consequently found it easy to follow Calvin, and within a few years most of the churches in the Protestant cantons had accepted his doctrine. The Protestant churches of Strasbourg and other south German cities likewise followed Calvin, but as only Lutheranism was tolerated by the Treaty of Augsburg, Calvinism made slow progress in Germany in the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the Palatinate, Hesse, and several other German states turned to Calvinism, and in Bohemia and Hungary Calvin's doctrines gained wide acceptance.

**Huguenots
in France**

As was but natural, Calvin was especially anxious to convert France to his religion, but at first he met with slight success. Small groups of followers appeared in many places, but they were scarcely numerous

enough to be considered important. Toward the middle of the century, however, Calvinism began to spread more rapidly in France. Here, as in Germany, it became popular with the lesser nobility who felt themselves being crushed by royal absolutism, but it also appealed to many solid burghers in the towns, partly perhaps because of its frugal austerity, its simple ritual, and its clear-cut and highly rational theology. It has been estimated that the Huguenots—as French Calvinists are called—when at their maximum included almost a fifth of the population of France.

Calvinism met with greater success in the Netherlands, and John Knox established it firmly in Scotland. Knox had studied under Calvin at Geneva, but his form of Calvinism differed somewhat from the Genevan, partly in matters of church government and even more in austerity. It fitted the national character so well that when Mary Queen of Scots began to rule in 1561 she found it impossible to reestablish Catholicism. Even in the days of Edward VI, Calvinist preachers had appeared in England, and under Mary Tudor many English exiles fled to Geneva, where they were thoroughly indoctrinated by Calvin. As soon as Elizabeth ascended the throne, these exiles flocked back to England, bringing their radical ideas with them. Though nearly all were willing to enter the Anglican Church at first, they presently came to form a distinct party, known as the Puritans. They agreed broadly with other Anglicans on theological questions but differed on church government, while urging a simpler ritual and a more austere morality.

Circumstances thus forced Calvinism to adapt itself to various political regimes. In the Swiss cantons and Scotland it became the state religion, supported by the government, required of everybody, and persecuting nonconformists for heresy. Elsewhere Calvinists were only a minority, more or less subject to persecution. The Catholic sovereigns, Charles V and later Philip II of Spain, vainly ordered the Inquisition to root out the Dutch Calvinists. In England they were at first only a party within the Anglican Church, but early in the next century they began organizing separate churches of their own. In France they worshiped publicly in their own churches, but they often were subject to persecution or mob violence. The result was that most Calvinists, living under hostile governments, were critical of their rulers. Many years were to pass, however, before even the Calvinists came to advocate a complete separation of the two powers. Political circumstances also made Calvinism an international

**Nether-
lands,
Scotland,
England**

**Internat-
ional
Calvinism**

religion, like Catholicism, while Lutheranism and Anglicanism remained national religions. The Calvinists never set up an international ecclesiastical organization, comparable to the papacy, but they kept in touch with fellow Calvinists everywhere, and for many years Geneva remained an international capital for Calvinism, just as Rome was the international capital of Catholicism.

THE MINOR SECTS

Increasing sectarianism

In the course of half a century the universal medieval church thus fell into four major parts—Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, and Calvinist—and this fourfold division persists to the present day. But when Luther began talking about the rights of the individual conscience he unwittingly opened the gates to further divisions and subdivisions. Minor sects arose, even in his day, and the process has since continued unabated. In the sixteenth century these minor sects doubtless seemed rather insignificant, because of the relatively small numbers they attracted, but today they seem more consequential. They were the first to champion such essentially modern ideas as religious toleration and the separation of church and state, and they contributed signally to the general religious and social progress of Europe and America. They are of especial interest to Americans because they provided many of the earlier and more influential settlers in this country. America has always been a land of many sects, and the political and social institutions that we now regard as essential to our liberty and democracy can be attributed in considerable measure to our religious sectarianism.

Anabaptists

Even while Luther was in the Wartburg, Thomas Münzer (1491–1525) and other radicals appeared at Wittenberg, preaching strange doctrines and claiming to enjoy special revelations from heaven. Luther soon expelled them from the city, but they continued their preaching elsewhere, even after Münzer had been executed for his part in the Peasants' Revolt. As one of their principal doctrines taught that there is no merit in the baptism of infants (who could understand nothing of what was being done to them), and as they rebaptized adults entering their group, such persons were called Anabaptists ("re-baptizers"). There were numerous varieties of Anabaptists, but in general they were very democratic, they took seriously the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all true believers, they sometimes developed radical doctrines about the common ownership of property,

and they often showed great courage in the face of persecution. New leaders arose after Münster's death, and in 1535 they seized Münster, in western Germany, where for about a year they endeavored to establish their Utopia. At last they were driven from the city, but not until their activities had given all Protestantism a bad reputation in some quarters. Our accounts of what they did when in power all come from hostile witnesses, who make it appear that theirs was a reign of unbridled licentiousness. The sect was not stamped out, however, and wandering preachers spread its doctrines far and wide among the humbler classes in Germany, the Netherlands, and England. Many of these doctrines were perpetuated, in much milder form, in the Baptist churches that appeared in England in the next century.

At the same time there appeared small groups of pious and humble persons whom historians have tried, rather unsuccessfully, to connect with the Waldensians of the Middle Ages (see page 525). A Dutch group of this sort became known as Mennonites while the rather similar Moravian Brethren spread from Bohemia. These groups too were very democratic, insisting that everyone could interpret the Scriptures for himself with the aid of an "inner light" by which all men are guided. This light may burn more brightly in some men than in others, but it never is wholly lacking. Members of these groups usually were pacifists, sometimes they held property in common, and though they worked hard they lived in apostolic simplicity. In the next century many of their ideas were adopted by the Quakers, and still later they influenced John Wesley, the founder of Methodism.

**Mennonites
and
Moravian
Brethren**

Other men became more skeptical theologically than either Luther or Calvin. Some questioned the Trinity, others declared that Jesus was a prophet but not God, others doubted the immortality of the soul. Miguel Serveto (1511-1553), a Spaniard educated in France and usually known by his Latinized name, Servetus, was a man of very wide attainments. He first studied law, then taught mathematics at Paris, where he was among the first to accept the new Copernican astronomy; he became a Biblical scholar and translated parts of the Bible; he studied medicine and discovered pulmonary circulation of the blood long before Harvey discovered its general circulation; and for several years he served the bishop of Vienne (near Lyons) as personal physician. He expressed his doubts regarding the Trinity in a book entitled *Christianismi Restitutio* ("The Restoration of Christianity," 1553), a copy of which he presented to Calvin in the fond hope of making a convert. Calvin, who for once in his life was happy to

**Michael
Servetus**

coöperate with the Catholics, denounced Servetus to the bishop, who ordered the heretic burned by a slow fire. Servetus escaped from Vienne, however, and unwisely went to Geneva, where Calvin had him arrested and burned (October 27, 1553). The story does not stop here, however, for a few months later a French Protestant living in Switzerland, Sebastianus Castellio (1515-1563)—a humanist who had been expelled from the Genevan clergy for his liberal views—published an attack upon Calvin which later became famous as an early defense of religious toleration.

**Early
Unitarians**

The real founders of Unitarianism—the doctrine which denies the Trinity and declares that Jesus was not God but a great teacher who should be admired, revered, and followed, but may not be worshiped—were two Italians from Siena, Lelio Sozzini or Socinus (1525-1562) and his nephew Fausto (1539-1604). Though trained as a lawyer, Lelio studied theology at Wittenberg and Geneva, was led to doubt the Trinity by the uproar over Servetus, and spent his last years at Zurich, where he was not bothered for his unorthodox opinions. His radical nephew Fausto, fleeing the Inquisition, founded Unitarian churches in Poland and later in Hungary. At first Unitarianism was known as Socinianism, from these founders, and before many years had passed, highly educated rationalists sharing such views were to be found in many parts of western Europe.

39. THE CATHOLIC REFORMERS

THE new religious life that appeared in the years preceding 1517 was fully as vigorous in southern Europe as it was in the north. Erasmus and the Christian humanists were read in Italy, and particularly in Spain. People were interested in the Bible, and a few even talked about justification by faith. These southern leaders were not followers of Luther, however, and it is an error to think of their agitation as merely a response to his challenge. They began to think along these new lines long before he rose above the horizon, and they went on without regard to him or the local successes of his followers.

The activities of these Catholic reformers covered many fields. Some demanded a more pious and attentive clergy. There was a great revival of missionary activity, especially among Spaniards inspired by the famous Cardinal Ximenes. Sometimes enthusiasts organized themselves in small informal groups, such as the Oratory of the Divine Love at Rome (1516), or they reformed old monastic orders, as when the Capuchins reformed the Franciscan order (1528). Others led austere and ascetic lives, or showed a new zeal in caring for the sick and the unfortunate; and still others devised new forms of worship. These men presently rose to positions of importance in the church, and Paul III (1534-1549) named a few of them cardinals. Among his appointees were the moderate and enlightened Reginald Pole, who became primate of England under Queen Mary, and Giovanni Caraffa, an austere and unbending member of the new Theatine order, who became Pope Paul IV (1555-1559). He was followed by a succession of pious and serious popes who had little in common with their Borgia and Medici predecessors.

Meantime various European statesmen had decided that their political interests required the preservation of the Catholic Church. What English Protestantism owed to Henry VIII and Elizabeth, and what

**Reformers
in southern
Europe**

**New piety
and new
monastic
orders**

**Politicians
and
Catholicism**

Lutheranism owed to the feudal princes of Germany, Spanish Catholicism owed to Charles V and his son Philip II. Likewise it was for political rather than religious reasons that Francis I decided that France should remain Catholic. It is worth noting, however, that political considerations also caused Francis to support the Protestant princes of Germany against Charles V and even to stir up the Moslem sultan of Turkey against his Catholic rival. He considered Protestantism and Islam very good religions, when in their proper places, but France definitely was not their proper place. These statesmen knew, however, that if the Catholic Church was to survive with enough vitality to be of service to them, it must be thoroughly reformed. They therefore instigated church reform in their respective countries.

The Jesuits

**Ignatius
Loyola**

Especially powerful among the new forces at work in the Catholic Church was the Society of Jesus, whose members are commonly called Jesuits. The founder of this order, the Spaniard Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), followed the profession of arms until wounds received in 1521 put an end to his military career. During his convalescence he decided to devote the remainder of his life to promoting the cause of religion, though for several years he was rather vague as to how this might best be done. After making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he decided that he needed a better education and therefore, at the age of thirty-four, he became a student, first at the universities of Alcalá and Salamanca, and later (1528) in the Collège de Montaigu at Paris. His unconventional ways caused people to suspect him of heresy, and on several occasions he was reported to the Inquisition. The charges were absurd, and he easily cleared himself, but for many years he had trouble living down the fact that he had been dragged before that tribunal.

**The Society
of Jesus**

While at Paris Ignatius gathered about him a small group of like-minded enthusiasts who took vows of poverty and chastity and pledged themselves to become missionaries after a visit to Jerusalem (1534). They presently set off in that general direction, but they could not find the means to continue their journey beyond Venice. Here they were ordained priests (1537), and here they began calling themselves the "Society of Jesus." They carefully worked out a constitution for their order, which was rather along military lines, provid-



LOYOLA, Painting by Morales. Prado, Madrid. (Bettmann Archive)

ing for officers and strict obedience to orders, and they eventually persuaded Pope Paul III to grant them official recognition (1540). Ignatius was chosen the first general of the Society (1541). New members were admitted, and when Ignatius died fifteen years later, the Jesuits were a strong, well-organized group of serious and able men bent on refashioning the world according to their conception of Catholicism.

Ignatius is famous not only as the founder of the Society of Jesus but also as the author of a book entitled *Spiritual Exercises*. Being a man of mystical temperament, who occasionally saw visions, he read the works of several medieval Spanish mystics. At Paris he apparently was somewhat influenced by the Dutch mysticism of the Brethren of the Common Life, but he remained fundamentally Spanish, a pre-

**Loyola's
Spiritual
Exercises**

cursor of the great Spanish mystics of a half-century later, St. Theresa (1515-1582) and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591). As with them, his mystic visions did not prevent Ignatius from leading an extremely active life in the world, and his book, setting forth his system of devotion, is one of the most famous manuals of piety in Christian literature.

Activities
of early
Jesuits

Ignatius and his associates were very careful in selecting new members of the Society of Jesus. They accepted only men of good appearance, strong physique, and high intelligence, well educated, and of high, or at least good, social background. They then gave these recruits several years of rigorous training, including constant use of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Having finished this course of training, the novices took the three vows of all religious orders—poverty, chastity, obedience—to which the Jesuits added a fourth, loyalty to the pope. Within a short time Jesuits had invaded many fields of activity. Some became missionaries, the most famous of this group being St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552), one of Ignatius's earliest associates, who converted—or at least baptized—tens of thousands in India, China, and Japan. Some went to reconvert Protestants, and others became popular preachers at home. Within a few decades the Jesuits were famous for their schools, which were scattered over all Catholic Europe and which were reputed to be the best as well as the most fashionable in the world. Still other Jesuits wrote ponderous tomes on theology or became excellent scholars in other fields. For at least two centuries the Jesuits provided the intellectual leadership of Catholicism, and they are a great power even today.

Inquisition
and Index

Pope Paul III also reorganized the Inquisition, making it a more formidable as well as a more efficient instrument for the suppression of heresy. Originally organized in the thirteenth century, the Inquisition, like so many medieval institutions, had fallen into decay and, except for an occasional burst of activity by some zealous official, it functioned in a rather hit-or-miss fashion. Late in the fifteenth century an improved Inquisition was set up in Spain, under the notorious Torquemada (see page 662). This Spanish Inquisition was so energetic, especially in the Netherlands, that Paul reorganized the papal Inquisition along lines suggested by the new Spanish model (1540). A year later he ordered the preparation of the "Index"—the list of books which loyal Catholics are forbidden to read—but the first edition of that work did not appear until 1559.

The Council of Trent

These various acts of Paul III are to be attributed to the men around him, rather than to the pope himself, and the same must be said regarding the most spectacular event of his reign, the meeting of the Council of Trent. Reformers had requested a church council even before Luther began his agitation; Luther had called for one in the early days; and many powerful persons, both Catholics and Protestants, had since reëchoed the demand. But formidable obstacles stood in the way. First of all, the popes feared that such a council might revive the conciliar doctrines of Constance and Basel, claiming superiority over the pope himself. Indeed, the very calling of such a council might seem to indicate that the pope was not so all-powerful as he claimed to be. Others opposed a council for even more worldly reasons; it might get out of hand and reform abuses from which high churchmen profited. The Emperor Charles V was also anxious to settle the religious disputes in Germany, and therefore demanded a council. He even threatened to call a national council of the German churches if the pope failed to order a council representing all Western Christians. Francis I, on the other hand, wished to keep Germany in a state of anarchy as long as possible, and opposed any step that might settle the religious differences there.

*Delay
in calling
a council*

On more than one occasion Charles induced Clement VII to promise a council, but the pope always found good reasons for delaying just a little longer, and he died without having redeemed his promises. Paul III followed the same dilatory tactics for several years, and when he could no longer resist the demands for a council, he reluctantly consented (1542). Had this council been held during the 1520's, Protestant leaders might have attended, and reasonable Catholics might have found some way of restoring the unity of the church. But when Paul III finally convoked the council, it was too late. A new generation of Protestants had arisen, under the inspiration of Calvin, who were no longer willing to debate the questions at issue with the Catholics, while the Catholic Church was led by equally intransigent leaders such as Caraffa, later Pope Paul IV. No Protestants attended the council.

*Belated-
ness a
fatal error*

The council finally assembled at Trent, near the Austro-Italian frontier, where its sessions fell into three distinct periods: December, 1545, to February, 1548; March, 1551, to April, 1552; and January,

*Sessions of
the council*

1562, to December, 1563. Charles's victories over the German Protestant princes came between the first two periods, giving hope to the Catholics that they might regain everything by force; his defeats and the Peace of Augsburg (1555) came between the last two, embittering them and rendering them more intransigent than ever. The most important work of the council was therefore accomplished during the first of the three periods. Attendance was very small, with only twenty or thirty persons present at some sessions, and with at most two hundred in attendance, as opposed to the thousand or fifteen hundred who had attended medieval councils. As the majority of those present were Italians, with Spaniards forming the next largest group, the popes easily dominated the council. In practice, Caraffa and his intransigents dominated it during the first period while the Jesuits took control later.

**Traditional
theology
reaffirmed**

The council opened with a dispute as to which matters should be considered and which should come first. Charles V and many others wished the council to concern itself primarily with church reform and the eradication of abuses. The papal party, on the other hand, wished it to deal first of all with matters of dogma. In the end, two commissions worked simultaneously on these two matters. No concessions were made to Protestants regarding dogma. The council merely reaffirmed, without much debate, the traditional Catholic doctrines as set forth by the medieval schoolmen. Shortly after the last session closed, a document known as the *Professio Fidei Tridentina* ("The Profession of Faith of Trent") was drawn up summarizing the decisions of the council on doctrinal matters. This *Professio* has ever since been considered a basic statement of Catholic dogma. The council allowed freer discussion of church reform, and a few salutary measures were taken, but here too the council disappointed many reformers. During the next fifty years, however, a series of able and worthy popes eliminated the major abuses that had been festering in the church.

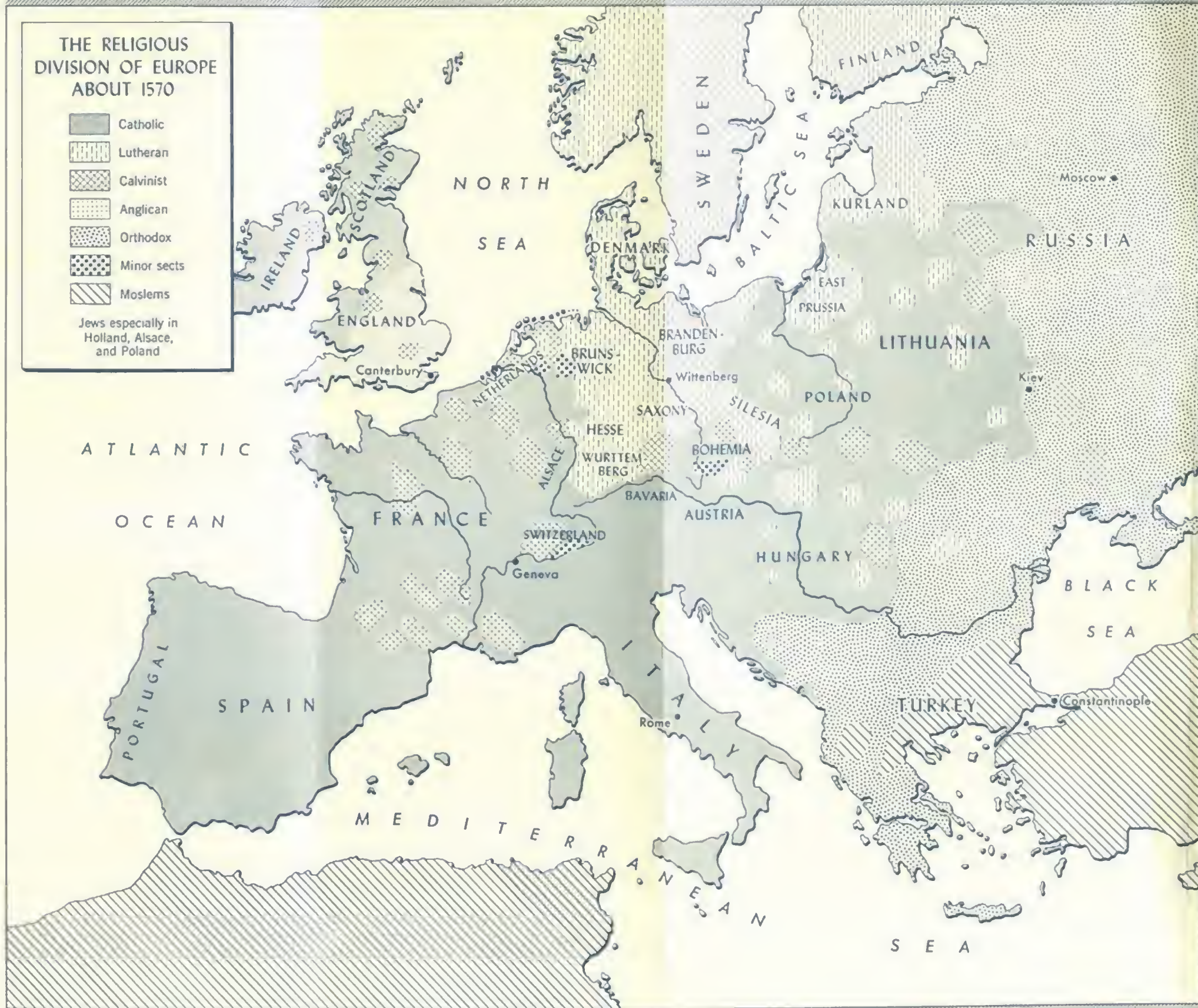
**Religious
division
permanent**

The intransigence shown by the Council of Trent made it perfectly clear that there no longer was any hope for the reconciliation of Protestants and the reunion of Latin Christendom. Before the council dissolved, Germany had achieved a settlement of her graver religious problems in the Peace of Augsburg (1555), Anglicanism was again firmly established in England, the Calvinistic churches had consolidated their major conquests, and the religious map of western Europe was approximately what it has remained ever since.

THE RELIGIOUS DIVISION OF EUROPE ABOUT 1570

-  Catholic
-  Lutheran
-  Calvinist
-  Anglican
-  Orthodox
-  Minor sects
-  Moslems

Jews especially in
Holland, Alsace,
and Poland



THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF

In concluding our account of the Reformation we may summarize the position of each of the major churches on the cardinal matters in dispute. These disputes covered many fields: the sources of religious knowledge, the means of "justification," the sacraments, church ritual, church government, and the relations of church and state.

Protestants agreed that the Bible must be the sole and ultimate source of all religious doctrine. Catholics, on the other hand, supplemented the Bible with church tradition, as handed down by the councils and popes. Protestants declared that every Christian is capable of interpreting the Bible for himself while Catholics insisted that only church officials can interpret it correctly. It must be added, however, that the major Protestant churches did not always live up to their teaching, for they used violence to suppress Anabaptists and others who, in their opinion, misinterpreted the Scriptures.

This reliance on the Bible raised the question, Exactly what books make up the Bible? Throughout the Middle Ages Catholics had used the Latin translation of Jerome (d. 420), commonly known as the Vulgate, and the Council of Trent declared this version authoritative. The Protestant leaders, on the other hand, being more deeply influenced by Erasmus and the humanists, went back to the Greek and Hebrew texts. Serious difficulties thus arose, especially regarding the Old Testament, within which the Vulgate includes fourteen books, or long parts of books, that are not found in the Hebrew Bible. These fourteen books are the Apocrypha (see page 89). Catholics retained them as inspired Scripture while Protestants rejected them—though many editions of Luther's and the King James versions inserted them between the Old and New Testaments on the ground that they contained "examples of godly living" even though they might not be used to prove a doctrine. There was also serious doubt as to the exact text of the books of the Bible, for countless variations had crept into the text during the long centuries when all books were laboriously copied by hand. The Council of Trent therefore ordered the preparation of a standard edition of the Vulgate, which finally appeared in 1593 under Pope Clement VIII. Modern Catholic Bibles are translated from the Latin text found in this Clementine Vulgate. Early Protestant New Testaments were translated from Erasmus's Greek text, as revised by two French Protestants, while the Protestant Old Testament was based on a standard text used by the Jews.

*The matters
at issue*

*Authority
of the
Bible*

What Bible?

Justification

The second major subject of theological controversy was "justification"—that is, the means by which sins are forgiven and a man may become acceptable to God and thus achieve "salvation," or, as it is vulgarly expressed, "get into heaven." Protestants taught "justification by faith alone," that is, by unfailing trust in the merey of God and Christ, while Catholics taught "justification by faith and works," the works being pious acts such as prayers, pilgrimages, and alms. Luther and the other Protestants said, however, that if a man really had faith, he would want to perform good works, in the technical sense of the term, just as he would lead a righteous life. Both Catholics and Protestants agreed as to the general depravity of all men and the necessity of divine intervention if they were to improve.

Penance

The sacraments, too, were much discussed, especially penance and the Eucharist. Luther had started his public career by rejecting the whole apparatus of penance, and in this he was followed by all other Protestants. This rejection included not only the abolition of indulgences but also the elimination of confession, of the doctrines of the treasury of good works and of purgatory, and of prayers for the dead. Catholics retained all the old doctrines, but they took steps to eliminate the scandals resulting from the sale of indulgences. Catholics also continued and even elaborated the cult of the Virgin Mary and the saints, calling upon them for aid in this world and the next. Lutherans and Anglicans eliminated this cult but continued to honor a few of the saints (those mentioned in the New Testament) on their festival days and to name churches after them. The Calvinists discontinued this slight honor and deprived even the New Testament heroes of the title "Saint."

Eucharist

There were wider differences of opinion regarding the Eucharist. Catholics retained the doctrine of transubstantiation to explain the "real presence" of Christ in the consecrated elements (see page 511). Protestants denied transubstantiation, but they differed among themselves regarding the "real presence." Luther sought to retain the fundamental doctrine by saying that God is present in the elements just as fire is present in a hot iron. His doctrine was called "consubstantiation." Zwingli denied the "real presence" and regarded the "Communion service"—which was all that he retained—as a mere memorial of Christ's Last Supper with his disciples. Calvin spoke emphatically of a "real presence" but interpreted it spiritually. Anglicans held various opinions, with the "High Church" faction accepting

the "real presence" and verging on transubstantiation while the "Low Church" tended to agree with Zwingli or Calvin.

The Council of Trent reaffirmed the doctrine of seven sacraments, as taught by the medieval scholastics. The Protestants, on the other hand, often spoke of two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. All Protestants continued to hold marriage ceremonies in their churches, though matrimony was no longer considered a sacrament. Likewise, clergymen were ordained in one manner or another, that is, they were formally admitted to the society of pastors of their church. Lutherans and Anglicans continued to confirm adolescents, but Calvinists abolished the rite though retaining a ceremony by which adolescents "join the church."

Sacraments

Catholics continued to conduct church services in Latin while Protestants used only the language of the country. The Anglican prayer book carefully prescribed the order of worship, ordaining rituals that differed little from those of the Catholic Church, with the Mass being somewhat simplified as "Holy Communion." The Lutherans permitted wider variations, and the Calvinists departed still farther from the old practices in worship. Their services were very simple, centering around Scripture reading and the sermon, and with each clergyman composing his own prayers. Protestants removed statues and pictures from churches, and usually they removed the altars as well. Anglicans kept the altars but officially called them "tables." Calvinists even removed organs from their churches, but Anglicans and Lutherans saw no harm in retaining them.

**Church
services**

Catholics preserved the old church organization with priests, bishops, archbishops, and pope. Anglicans changed very little except by rejecting the pope. Their church was governed by the archbishop of Canterbury through bishops and priests. The Lutherans retained bishops, but with greatly reduced powers, while the Calvinists abolished them completely. Each Calvinist church was governed by its pastor and by elders chosen from the laity. The pastors tended to form a closed corporation, however, assembling from time to time to discuss common problems. The minor sects were much more democratic, often electing their clergy, or even allowing anyone to preach who had something to say. Monastic orders were abolished in all Protestant countries.

**Church
government**

In nearly every case the reformers of the sixteenth century left final authority in the church in the hands of secular princes. If England

**Cuius regio,
eius religio**

and northern Germany became Protestant while France and southern Germany remained Catholic, it was because their respective rulers wished it so. Princes selected the religion of the country without consulting the people. In practice, though not in theory, all western Europe accepted the principle expressed in the formula *Cuius regio, eius religio*. Moreover, each secular prince dominated the church in his country. The Concordat of 1516 gave Francis I all the power he wanted over the Catholic Church in France; the kings of Spain and the Holy Roman emperors were equally powerful over their churches; and it is worth noting that after the Reformation there were no more great political popes until the nineteenth century. Lutherans and Anglicans likewise allowed the secular authorities to name church officials and even to settle matters of ritual, discipline, and doctrine. The Calvinist churches showed greater independence, but whenever possible—as in Geneva—they identified themselves so closely with the government that it was hard to say which was acting in a given case. The sixteenth century thus witnessed the collapse of the medieval church as a political power and set up instead a variety of national churches, each dominated by the secular rulers.

**Freedom
of religion
yet unborn**

It is therefore incorrect to speak of the sixteenth century as bringing religious liberty to Europe. In fact, there was greater religious freedom in Europe before the Reformation than during and just after it. The new secular rulers were as anxious as the medieval popes to dominate men's minds and preserve religious uniformity, and they were far more efficient in extirpating opinions of which they disapproved. In those days only the sects that remained hopeless minorities talked about religious liberty, and with those sects lay the world's hope for freedom and toleration.

XV

Columbus' Ship (*Bettmann Archive*)



EUROPE AND THE NEW WORLD

ROUNDING OUT THE WORLD—
TRADE AND STATECRAFT

New World	Economic Changes	Spanish Leadership	Contemporary Events
1488 Dias discovers Cape of Good Hope		1479- Ferdinand and Isabella rule Spain	
1492 Columbus discovers America		1492 Union of Spain completed; Jews expelled	1494 French invade Italy
1498 Vasco da Gama reaches India			
1509- Albuquerque in India	"Commercial Revolution"		
1515	Price Revolution	1516 Charles I of Spain becomes	1513 Machiavelli's <i>Prince</i>
1519 Cortés in Mexico	1520-1600		1515- Francis I of France
1519- Magellan circumnavigates globe	Advance of Spain and Portugal	1519- Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor	1547
1521	Decline of Italy and Germany	1536 Wars with French in Italy	1517 Luther's 95 Theses
1531 Pizarro in Peru		1521- Religious Wars in Germany	1527 Imperial troops sack Rome
1535 Cartier discovers the St. Lawrence		1546 Religious Wars in Germany	1536 Calvin's <i>Institutes</i>
1541 De Soto discovers the Mississippi	Dominance of Antwerp bankers	1555 Religious Peace of Augsburg	1536 Franca-Turkish alliance
1535- New Spain and Peru organized		1556- Philip II, King of Spain	1558- Elizabeth, Queen of England
1580		1598 Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (Spain dominates Italy)	1603
		1559 Dutch rebellion	1562- Wars of Religion in France
		1568 Dutch rebellion	1598
		1576 Spanish Fury in Antwerp	1572 St. Bartholomew's Day massacre
1576 Frobisher seeks Northwest Passage	Dutch mariners		
1577- Drake circumnavigates globe	English Trading Companies	1580- Union of Spain and Portugal	
1580		1640 Murder of William of Orange	1587 Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots
1584 Raleigh tries to colonize Virginia	1600 English East India Company	1584 Spanish Armada	1589- Henry IV, King of France
		1588	1610
			1598 Edict of Nantes

40. ROUNDING OUT THE WORLD

THE fourteenth and fifteenth centuries witnessed the gradual disintegration of the medieval system that had attained maturity in the thirteenth, and in the sixteenth century its collapse became complete. Aggressive and absolutistic national states put an end to the dream of a universal empire; humanism superseded scholasticism as the dominant mode of thought; and the universal church was replaced by many competing sects. These far-reaching changes often caused deep anxiety and a dread of the new and the unfamiliar. Men listened apprehensively as prophets of doom repeated the dire prophecies of the Apocalypse. Nevertheless, the sixteenth century also brought a new spirit of hope that restored courage to a frightened world. Outmoded social, political, and religious institutions gradually gave way to something better; the new modes of thought proved more satisfactory than the old; and discoveries beyond the seas opened men's eyes to a rich new world. The long economic depression of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was conquered at last; the population of Europe began to increase once more; new wealth was created; courageous pioneers dared risk their fortunes and themselves in new and untried enterprises; and in every walk of life men found new outlets for their exuberant energies. The sixteenth therefore became one of the great creative centuries in world history.

The most powerful constructive forces creating this new Europe were economic. The universal empire and the universal church might be rent asunder, but agriculture, industry, commerce, and finance were prosperous at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The most fundamental, though certainly not the most spectacular, changes

*Hope and
fear in the
sixteenth
century*

*Improved
agriculture*

of the day were those that ushered in an improved agriculture. Augmentation of the food supply made possible an increased population, and new numbers brought new vigor to the old Europe. This new agriculture resulted in part from a more efficient organization of farms and in part from improved methods of cultivation. What remained of serfdom and the manorial system declined steadily, and the old system under which each peasant cultivated several small and widely separated strips of land was replaced by one under which each man tilled a single compact field of his own. The old strips, being considered the property of the community as a whole, had been redistributed from time to time, supposedly in order that everyone might share equally in good and bad land. Under the new system the yeoman farmer owned the field he cultivated, and security of tenure encouraged him to invest money and labor in permanent improvements that would increase its productivity. There was also much experimentation in methods of farming, and the average yield per acre increased by at least a quarter during the century. Moreover, improved ships made possible the transportation of grain for long distances, thus promoting an international division of labor and creating new markets. East Germany and the Baltic countries began to supply the Netherlands and England with grain while Spain imported it in large quantities from Sicily.

**Fishing in
the Atlantic**

The fishing industry increased its output correspondingly. The North Sea had formerly been the principal northern source of fish, but during the fifteenth century hardy mariners from western England and Brittany began to fish extensively in the Atlantic. As the location of their fishing areas was a carefully guarded secret, never committed to writing, we have no exact knowledge as to where they went, but scholars suspect that Bristol fishermen sometimes entered waters not far from Newfoundland.

**Progress in
commerce
and
industry**

Increasing population and rising standards of living among the rich created new markets for other commodities. Textiles remained a major commodity in both local and international trade, with many new and expensive cloths appearing upon the market. Mechanical inventions improved mining and metallurgy.¹ Various new industries gave employment, and the mercenary standing armies of kings and

¹ In 1530, for example, a German mineralogist named Georgius Agricola published an important treatise on mining, *De Re Metallica*. In 1912 an American mining engineer and his wife, H. C. and L. H. Hoover, translated the book into English. The engineer later became President of the United States.

princes absorbed an even larger portion of the surplus population. Bankers and financiers lent big sums to kings and invested heavily in the new industries. The new national monarchs of England, France, and Spain did much to reduce brigandage and internal disorder in their respective kingdoms, thereby facilitating trade. These countries therefore made rapid economic progress, and their businessmen were constantly on the lookout for new openings and quick to exploit every opportunity.

At just this time, too, science and technology were able to assist in the search for new trade routes and new markets. Larger and better ships now weathered serious storms. The magnetic needle had been known since the thirteenth century, but only in the fifteenth did improvements make the compass practical for use on sailing vessels and thus encourage mariners to venture far beyond the sight of land. The astrolabe enabled sailors to determine their latitude at sea, but aside from unreliable hourglasses they had no way of determining exact time or longitude. Scientific writers on astronomy and geography had long taught that the earth is a sphere and, knowing that the force of gravity always pulls toward the earth's center, they had even speculated on the possibility of circumnavigating the globe. In the fifteenth century, knowledge of geography made great progress, partly because of the studies and explorations of the Portuguese Prince Henry the Navigator, partly because of the wide popularity of Marco Polo's book, and partly from a reëxamination of ancient writers. Men began to suspect that there might still be new lands to discover and, more especially, that there might be new routes by which to reach the Far East and the fabulous wealth of the Orient. Ships, mariners, and capital thus became available to the enthusiastic and courageous adventurers who wished to make the search.

**Better
ships and
navigators**

COLUMBUS AND THE GREAT EXPLORERS

Portuguese activity in exploration had slumped seriously for several years after the death of Prince Henry the Navigator in 1460, but it was revived by King John II (1481-1495). As early as 1482 he sent out Diogo Cão, who reached the mouth of the Congo River, and in 1488 Bartolomeu Dias (c. 1450-1500) discovered the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. Earlier in that same year King John had dispatched another explorer, Pero de Covilhã, to India by way of Cairo and the Red Sea. Returning as far as Africa,

**Portuguese
exploration
of African
coast**

Covilhã followed the coast south past Zanzibar to the mouth of the Zambezi River, but ten years were allowed to pass before Vasco da Gama (c. 1469–1524) reached India by rounding the Cape of Good Hope (1498). Meantime Columbus had discovered America, and other discoveries began coming in quick succession.

**Christopher
Columbus**

Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) was born at Genoa, the son of a weaver. As a young man he sailed to Chios in the Aegean Sea (then a Genoese possession), and in 1476 he embarked as a common seaman for England. Though his ship was sunk by pirates and he was washed ashore in Portugal, he continued to England and perhaps he even reached Iceland. Returning to Portugal, he visited Madeira (1478) and the Guinea coast of Africa (1482). Meantime he had assured his social position by marrying a daughter of the Portuguese governor of Porto Santo, one of the Madeira Islands. At just the moment, therefore, when John II began to revive interest in exploration, Columbus was well placed to know what was happening in high quarters and to profit by the rising enthusiasm for discovery.

**The
planning
stage**

Columbus had already convinced himself that the fabulous Cathay and Cypango (China and Japan), described by Marco Polo, could be reached by sailing west, and he now began an intensive study of the problem. Learning of a Florentine scholar, Paolo Toscanelli, who had expressed views similar to his own as early as 1474, Columbus carefully studied his letters as well as the works of other authorities on geography, ancient and modern. In 1484 he was ready to lay his plans before King John, but when he asked for ships in which to sail west to Japan, John's experts accused him of fanciful dreaming and advised against the proposal. His wife having died, Columbus migrated to Spain, where at first he met no greater success. When Ferdinand and Isabella referred his proposal to the experts, these scholars, like their Portuguese colleagues, declared the enterprise impractical. At this time, moreover, the Spanish rulers were devoting their whole attention to the capture of Granada. After several years of waiting, Columbus was preparing to seek the aid of Charles VIII of France when Granada was taken and Isabella promised him the financial support he needed. The final papers were signed on April 30, 1492.

**Why the
experts
opposed
Columbus**

The experts who decided against Columbus's proposal have since been held up to much ridicule, especially by those who take a special delight in seeing eminent scholars confounded by ignorant persons. All sorts of fantastic superstitions have been falsely attributed to these experts in order to explain their adverse reports. As a matter of fact,

the experts knew as well as Columbus that the earth is round; they did not fear that if he reached the other side he would drop off into space; and they did not even worry about sea dragons and other fabled monsters of the deep. On the basis of the best geographic information then available, they were more nearly right than he. In making his calculations Columbus had vastly overestimated the eastward extension of Asia, and he underestimated the size of the earth by at least one-fifth. These errors led him to believe that Cypango lay only 750 leagues (about 2400 nautical miles) west of the Canary Islands: the actual distance air-line is 10,600 miles! The experts were almost exactly right regarding the size of the earth and more nearly right than he regarding that of Asia. Neither he nor they had ever dreamed that a great continent lay between Europe and Japan, and this unsuspected continent was Columbus's salvation. Had he not stumbled upon land some three thousand miles west of the Canaries, the world would have heard no more of Columbus, for even with the best equipment then available, he and his crews would certainly have perished from lack of food and water long before they could have made the long passage to Asia.

Columbus was given three ships, the *Santa Maria*, which became his flagship, the *Pinta*, and the *Niña*. Each of the latter was of about sixty tons burthen, approximately seventy feet long, and with a draught of not over six feet, while the former was somewhat larger, being of approximately a hundred tons burthen. The crews of the three vessels together numbered ninety men. Sailing from Palos, a small port in southwestern Spain, on August 3, 1492, Columbus reached the Canaries on the twelfth. Here he delayed for minor repairs, and not until September 9 did he sail westward into unknown seas. To maintain the morale of his crews, Columbus announced figures for each day's run that he believed to be too small—but actually his optimism led him to exaggerate the run, and the published figures were approximately correct. Nevertheless, the men became mutinous, fearing that their provisions would not hold out for a return to Spain from so great a distance, and at last, on October 10, when he knew that he was far more than 750 leagues west of the Canaries, Columbus promised to turn back if land did not appear within three days. The very next day birds and other evidences of nearby land raised everyone to a high pitch of excitement, land was sighted late on the following night, and Columbus disembarked on San Salvador in the Bahamas on October 12. Certain that Cypango and Cathay

*Discovery of
America*

could not be far away, he spent three months searching for them in the Caribbean Sea, discovered Cuba (October 29) and Hispaniola or Haiti (December 5), and lost the *Santa Maria* when the pilot carelessly ran her aground. On January 16 the two remaining vessels began their homeward voyage and, after annoying delays at the Azores and Lisbon, Columbus reached Palos once more on March 15, 1493.

**Later
voyages**

Ferdinand and Isabella received Columbus with great honor, formally conferring upon him the titles and emoluments they had promised in the initial agreement. They began planning a second expedition immediately, and on September 25, 1493, Columbus again set sail, accompanied by seventeen ships and about 1200 men, among them his brother Bartholomew. On Hispaniola Bartholomew established a city (Santo Domingo—recently renamed Ciudad Trujillo—the oldest white settlement in the Western Hemisphere), while Columbus explored the Caribbean more thoroughly, discovered Puerto Rico and Jamaica, and returned to Spain in June, 1496. On his third voyage (1498–1500) Columbus sailed farther south, discovered Trinidad, and explored a little of the northern coast of South America—which he fondly believed to be the Biblical Garden of Eden. Reaching Hispaniola, he learned that the colonists left there under the rule of Bartholomew had rebelled and run amuck during his absence. Peace was restored before the arrival of the royal governor requested by Columbus, but the governor sent the Columbus brothers back to Spain in chains. Though promptly liberated by Queen Isabella, Columbus's former high position was not restored to him. After a fourth voyage (1502–1504), during which he explored the coast of Central America and was marooned with some of his men for a year on Jamaica, Columbus died in Spain, an embittered old man, in 1506. A man of courage and deep piety, a skillful mariner, and one whose determination bordered at times on obstinacy, he was a poor governor, and, in the days of his glory, his pride seemed to give him delusions of grandeur. But he was a true son of the Renaissance, a man worthy to inaugurate a new age by the discovery of a new world.

Other Early Explorers

**Columbus's
successors**

The news of Columbus's discoveries encouraged others to undertake similar explorations, and the next few years saw many important voyages. A Genoese named John Cabot (1450–1498) apparently had begun dreaming of reaching China from England by a northwesterly

route as early as 1484. In 1497 he sailed from Bristol with one ship and eighteen men and he reached Cape Breton Island, between Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. The next year Henry VII sent him to Greenland, whence he sailed south past Labrador, Newfoundland, and the New England coast, perhaps reaching the coast of Delaware. Soon thereafter a Portuguese from the Azores, Gaspar Côrte-Real, independently discovered Newfoundland (1500). In that same year a Portuguese fleet commanded by Pedro Cabral, sailing for India along the route recently opened by Vasco da Gama, veered far to the west after leaving the Cape Verde Islands and reached the shores of Brazil, thus giving Portugal a claim to that country. Simultaneously a Spaniard named Alonso de Ojeda was discovering the mouth of the Amazon (1499), after which he explored the northern coast of South America as far west as a place which he called Venezuela ("Little Venice"). Ponce de León discovered Florida in 1512, he being the first Spaniard to touch the North American mainland, and in 1513 Vasco Núñez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and was the first European to gaze upon the Pacific, which he called the "South Sea."

By 1500 it had become evident to most scholars (though never to Columbus himself) that these new lands were not a part of Asia, and presently they gave them the name "America." Friends had printed the letters of a Florentine named Amerigo Vespucci (1451-1512), describing a voyage he made in 1497, discovering the mainland of South America about a year before Columbus. On another expedition he explored the Brazilian coast for the king of Portugal. In his letters Vespucci frequently used the expression "the New World," and on the basis of his narrative, an Alsatian geographer named Martin Waldseemüller proposed that the new continent be called "America" (1507). At first the name was applied only to South America, but later it covered North America as well. The old misconceptions persisted to such an extent, however, that we still call the American aborigines "Indians" and speak of the "West Indies."

The last of the great explorers of this great age was the Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan (*c.* 1480-1521). As a young man he had accompanied a Portuguese expedition to India, where he remained for seven years (1505-1512), and later he was employed by the king of Spain to seek a westward route to the East Indies. Setting sail with five ships in 1519, he followed the coast of Brazil and Argentina south almost to its end. After suppressing a mutiny and wintering in southern Argentina, he passed through the straits that now bear his name and

*The name
"America"*

*Ferdinand
Magellan*

with three ships headed into the ocean which he was the first to call the "Pacific." For ninety-eight days he sailed northwestward, with his crew suffering pitifully from scurvy, and at the end almost dying from lack of food and water, but in March, 1521, he reached Guam. Proceeding to the Philippines, he was killed in a battle with the natives (April 27). One of his ships continued westward, rounded the Cape of Good Hope, and reached Spain with only eighteen of the original crew of about 270 men (September 6, 1522). Thirteen others reached Europe later as prisoners of the Portuguese. This was the first ship to sail around the world, and if, as many believe, Magellan had reached the Moluccas on his earlier exploring expedition, he was the first man to circle the globe. He thus completed the work begun thirty years before by Christopher Columbus.

COLONIAL EMPIRES

Line of demarca- tion

As soon as Columbus touched land at San Salvador, he claimed the island for Ferdinand and Isabella, and immediately upon his return to Spain these sovereigns laid plans to monopolize the supposed new route to India. Fearing Portuguese interlopers, they referred the matter to Pope Alexander VI, who was a member of the Spanish Borgia family. The pope vaguely indicated a line one hundred leagues (slightly over three hundred miles) "west of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands" (the last of the Azores lies more than three hundred miles west of the last Cape Verde Island!) and with equal vagueness granted all the lands "west and south" of that line to Spain (May 4, 1493). When Portugal protested, the two kings negotiated the Treaty of Tordesillas, without papal assistance, establishing the "line of demarcation" 370 leagues (almost twelve hundred miles) west of the Cape Verde Islands (June 7, 1494). As the eastern tip of Brazil lies east of this line, some authorities suspect that the Portuguese may already have discovered that country, though we have no proof of any voyage there previous to Cabral's in 1500. At any rate, Portugal later based her claim to Brazil on this treaty as well as on right of discovery.

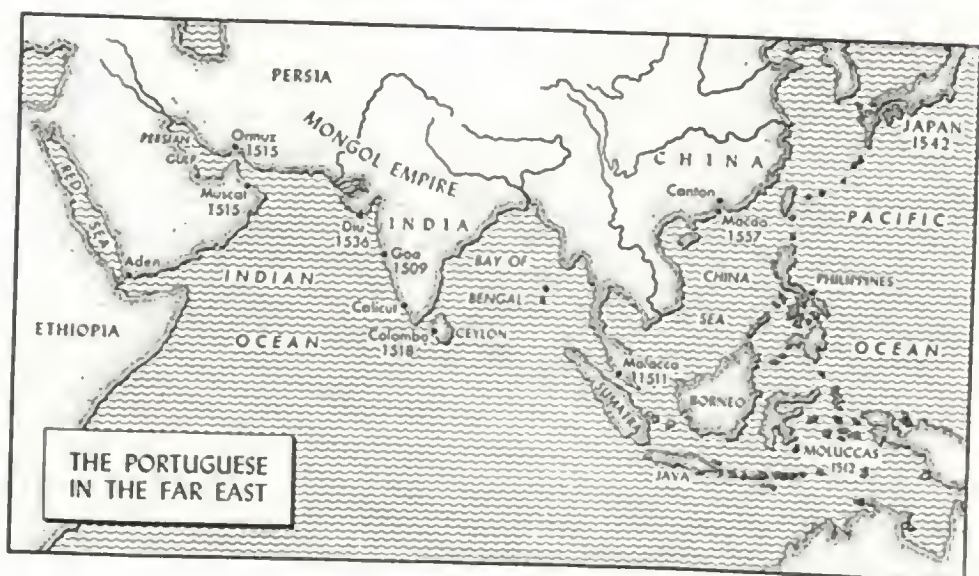
Portuguese in India

A few years after the signing of this treaty, Vasco da Gama discovered the eastward route to the Indies and brought back a rich cargo of spices from Calicut on the southwestern coast of India (1499). Every year thereafter a large Portuguese fleet followed his route to India and the foundations of a vast colonial empire were soon laid. These traders found India inhabited by an ancient and

highly civilized people, long accustomed to trade, whom they had neither the means, the need, nor the desire to subjugate (see Chapter VIII). They principally desired a few safely fortified ports where they could buy spices and other oriental luxuries, but they also wished to exclude all "Arab" (i.e., non-Indian) merchants from these regions. In the early days, their troubles were chiefly with Arab traders.

In 1505 the first Portuguese "governor" was sent to India with orders to erect forts at strategic points. The real founder of the Portuguese empire in India, however, was Affonso de Albuquerque (1453-1515), who followed in 1509. He firmly established himself at Goa (still a Portuguese possession), after which he undertook to close off the whole India Ocean by occupying its entrances. Advancing first to the east, he took Malacca (near the modern Singapore) and sent out an exploring party, of which Magellan was a member, that eventually reached the Moluccas (1511-1512). He then turned against his Moslem competitors. In 1513 he unsuccessfully attacked Aden (in Arabia at the foot of the Red Sea) and may even have dreamed of conquering Egypt. Two years later he entered the Persian Gulf, taking Muscat (near the eastern tip of Arabia) and Ormuz in Persia, near the foot of the Gulf. At this time Ormuz was one of the richest cities in Asia. Albuquerque died in 1515, before making the expedition he planned to China, but a few years later one of his associates reached Canton. Other Portuguese visited Japan in 1542, and in 1557 the Portuguese

**Affonso de
Albuquerque**



established themselves at Macao, which long remained the only European foothold in China. Thanks to Albuquerque's brilliant empire building, Portugal enjoyed a virtual monopoly on Indian trade in the sixteenth century. Lisbon replaced Venice as the European center of the spice trade and Portugal entered upon her golden age.

**Spaniards
in America**

Conditions in America imposed a very different task upon the Spaniards. The inhabitants of the Caribbean Islands were primitives who offered the Europeans little serious resistance. The men who sailed with Columbus on his second voyage were adventurers primarily interested in finding large stores of gold which they could carry off by force of arms, and they quickly overran Hispaniola, looting and raping to their hearts' content. The natives of the mainland were more highly civilized and more bellicose, but the Spaniards quickly learned that they could repeat the same general pattern of conquest.

**Mayas
and Aztecs**

The American continent had seen three rather advanced civilizations before the coming of the Spaniards. The Mayas of Guatemala had risen above savagery before the birth of Christ, and in the second century after Christ they surpassed their European contemporaries in some ways—an understanding of mathematics, for example. Somewhat after A.D. 500 they abandoned their early homes to settle in Yucatan, where they built large cities and where their culture reached its highest development five or six hundred years later. After the twelfth century the Mayas were cursed with civil wars, and their culture fell into decline, but much still remained for the Spaniards



AZTEC STATUE. (Bellmann Archive)

to destroy. Meantime, however, Mayan culture had spread north over Mexico, deeply influencing the men of a race called Toltecs, of whom not much is known. Then, in the course of the thirteenth century, a number of warlike tribes from the north, chief of whom were the Aztecs, settled near the present site of Mexico City. Their military ability enabled them to conquer much of Mexico before 1400, and building on Mayan foundations they developed a civilization that astonished the Spaniards and that has remained powerful in Mexico to our own day.

The achievements of the Mayas and Aztecs were truly remarkable. They built elaborate houses and temples, as well as lofty pyramids; they worked copper and bronze; they invented a system of writing; their mathematicians understood zero long before Europeans did; their calendar was more accurate than that then used in Europe; and they showed high artistic skill. The economic organization was sufficiently elaborate to support a population of perhaps five million (about one-third the present population of Mexico), and their capital city, with about sixty thousand houses and a population of perhaps 200,000, was as large, as rich, and perhaps as beautiful as any city in Europe at that time. But the Aztecs had failed to invent the wheel or the sail, they could not smelt iron, they had neither horses nor cattle, they did not use coined money, and at times their religion called for extensive human sacrifice. The Aztec political system was theocratic, the supreme ruler being both king and high priest, and government was inordinately oppressive. As decline had already set in, the Spaniards only added a final blow.

*Mexico
before the
Spaniards*

Meantime the Incas had created a parallel civilization in South America, high among the Andes of Peru and Ecuador. Though the early Incas apparently knew nothing of the Mayan civilization, their own culture was almost as ancient. They did not have the same high artistic and mathematical talent as the Mayas, and they never learned how to write, but they were more skillful in political organization and administration. They created a large empire and organized the economic life of their subjects in great detail. Like the Aztecs, they had a theocratic form of government, with their ruler claiming descent from the sun. They showed their skill at engineering by building great irrigation works, the water sometimes being conducted through long tunnels cut in solid rock and sometimes carried over aqueducts. A system of roads connected the capital city, Cuzco, with all parts of the empire. These roads were paved with rock and clay, steps helped

*The Incas
of Peru*

the ascent of steep grades, and suspension bridges crossed deep gorges. But the Incas too had passed their zenith before the Spaniards arrived, and their conquest caused no great trouble.

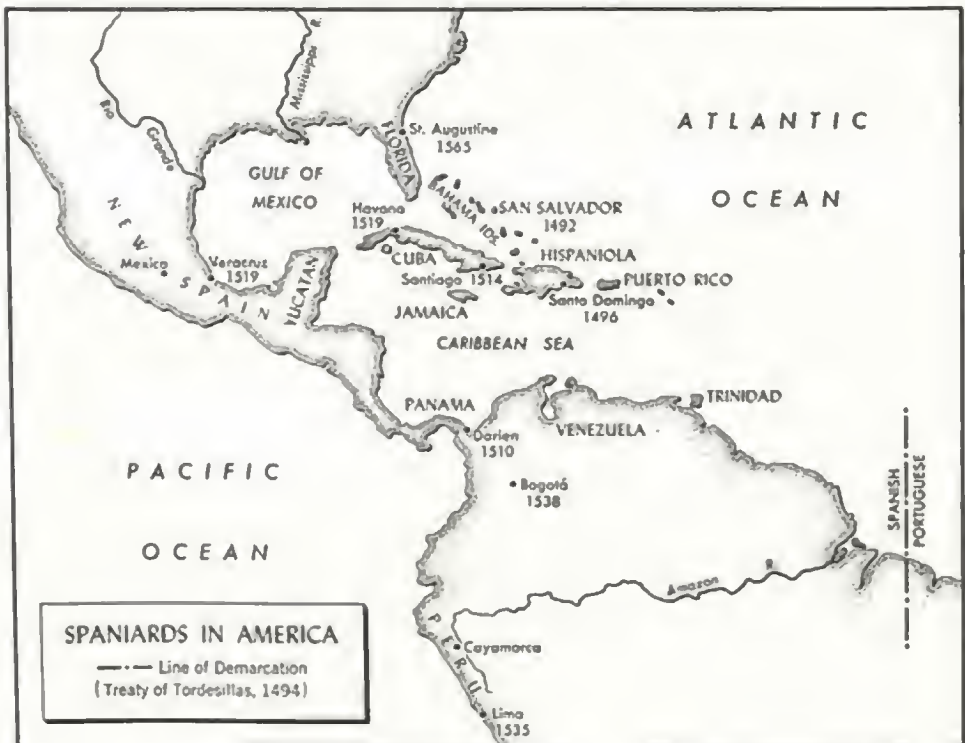
**The Indians
of North
America**

North of Mexico, in what is now the southwestern United States, the Pueblo Indians had made marked advance, though they did not approach the Aztecs or Incas in civilization. The Indians of the central plains and the eastern parts of the United States were still quite primitive. Though more bellicose than the peoples to the south, most of them had barely reached the stage of sedentary life.

The Conquistadores

**Hernando
Cortes**

The first of the great Spanish conquerors—or *conquistadores*, to use the Spanish term often reserved for these men—was Hernando Cortes (1485–1547). With an army of about six hundred men, recruited in Cuba and armed with ten cannons and seventeen horses, he landed at Veracruz in Mexico (March, 1519). Montezuma, king of



the Aztecs, unwisely sent him valuable presents which inflamed the Spaniard's covetous imagination. After making alliances with various Mexican tribes hostile to their Aztec overlords, and after scuttling his ships to show his men that they had no hope of returning to Cuba, Cortes marched on the Aztec capital at Tenochtitlán, now Mexico City. He was graciously received by Montezuma, whom he treacherously took prisoner and perhaps murdered. The Aztecs then expelled the Spaniards from the city, but within a few months Cortes was back. In spite of heroic resistance by the Aztecs, he reentered the city, which remained the Spanish capital thereafter (August, 1521). A year later the king of Spain named Cortes "governor and captain-general of New Spain." During the next few years Cortes subjugated a large part of Mexico with great brutality, but he presently fell into royal disfavor and returned to Spain, where he died in obscurity.

When Balboa was exploring Panama, reports reached him of a fabulously rich country to the south, and one of his companions, Francisco Pizarro (1470-1541), undertook to find this land. After preliminary explorations from which he learned the general location of the Inca empire, Pizarro returned to Spain and obtained the king's permission to conquer and govern the country. In 1531 he set forth upon his great expedition with only 180 men, 27 horses, and 2 cannons. When the Inca king paid him a formal visit of politeness at Caxamarco, Pizarro treacherously seized him and collected an enormous ransom—a room twenty-two feet by seventeen piled seven feet deep with gold and silver articles. Pizarro then generously granted the king an option between being burned at the stake as a heathen or baptized and strangled as a Christian. The unhappy king chose the latter alternative. These heroic deeds by the Spaniards so shattered the morale of the decadent Indians that their conquest presented few further difficulties. Pizarro entered and looted Cuzco without opposition a few weeks later. In 1535 Pizarro founded the city of Lima, still the capital of Peru, but he did not long enjoy his grandeur, for he was murdered by rivals in 1541.

During these years lesser conquistadores were overrunning Central America, and Spanish explorers vaguely staked out claims covering the greater part of South America. Bogotá, now the capital of Colombia, was founded in 1538 by Jiménez de Quesada, the third of the great conquistadores, and in that same year Asunción, now the capital of Paraguay, was established by explorers trying to reach Peru from the Atlantic by ascending the Río de la Plata. Meantime other ex-

**Francisco
Pizarro**

**Cities
in South
America**

plorers were working their way down the western coast of South America, and in 1541 Santiago was founded as the first city in Chile. An unsuccessful attempt to establish a colony at Buenos Aires, in Argentina, discouraged further efforts there until 1580. The first Portuguese colony in Brazil, located near São Paulo, was founded in 1531.

**Exploring
North
America**

Other explorers entered what is now the United States. Inspired by tales of rich cities to the north of Mexico, Francisco Coronado (1510-1554) led an expedition that crossed Texas, Oklahoma, and parts of Kansas before giving up the search (1540-1542). At approximately the same time Hernando de Soto (1499-1542), once a companion of Pizarro, was exploring the southern part of the United States. Starting from Florida, he discovered the Mississippi River in 1541, crossed Arkansas, and even reached Oklahoma. He died while descending the Mississippi on his return trip, but some of his men eventually reached the Gulf and sailed to Mexico. However, the first permanent Spanish settlement in the present United States (at St. Augustine, Florida) dates only from 1565.

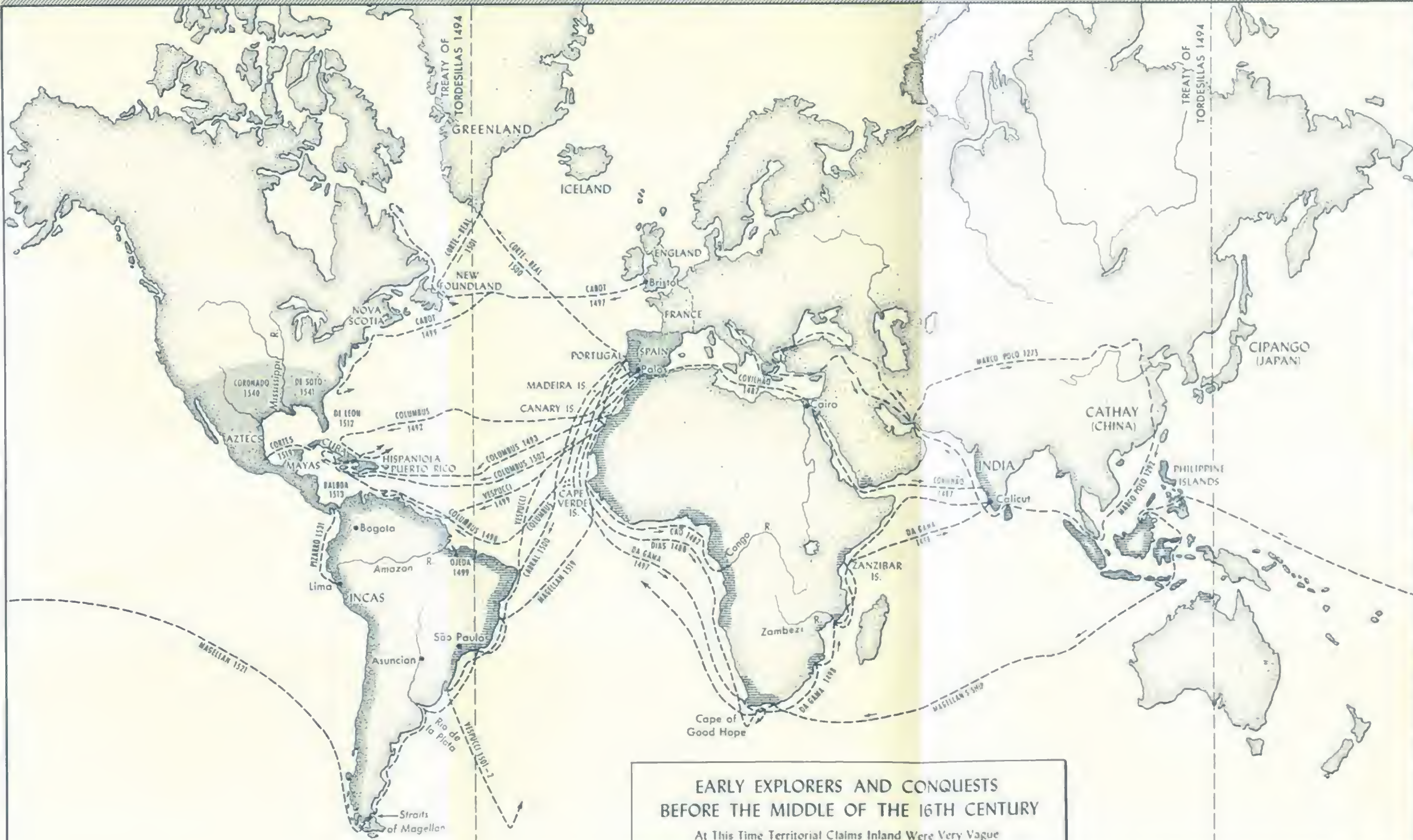
Colonial Government

**Colonies
the property
of the
king**

The original agreement between Columbus and the Spanish sovereigns provided that he should be "admiral and viceroy and governor" of whatever islands and mainland he might discover and acquire. The wild behavior of his men on Hispaniola during and after his second expedition showed, however, that Columbus was not a competent governor and that other arrangements must be made. After his return in disgrace from the third voyage, Columbus was again named admiral, but not viceroy or governor. A royal governor was sent to Hispaniola, who governed in the king's name and at his pleasure. The conquistadores were not given promises as ample as those given Columbus, and though at first they were allowed great freedom, the crown soon took over in every case. Thereafter Spanish officials in America governed primarily in the interests of the kings of Spain, who regarded the colonies as their personal property.

**Colonial
adminis-
tration**

From these modest beginnings a complicated administrative system was speedily developed. At its top was the Council of the Indies, sitting in Spain and under close royal supervision, which made all important appointments and exercised a general jurisdiction over all colonial matters. Supreme command in America was entrusted to two



viceroy, resembling those already used by the king of Aragon to govern Sicily. The viceroy of New Spain had charge of Central and North America and the West Indies while the viceroy of Peru governed the territories conquered by Pizarro. The first viceroy of New Spain, Antonio de Mendoza (1535-1549), was an exceptionally able man, who successfully organized his vast domains, politically, economically, and religiously, but not until Francisco de Toledo became viceroy of Peru in 1569 did the Spaniards achieve equal success in that area. The territories of these viceroys were divided into smaller units, ruled by *audiencias* or councils modeled on bodies set up in Spain to govern new territories as they were taken from the Moors. In the sixteenth century there were ten such *audiencias* in the New World. There were also municipalities whose government resembled that of the towns in Spain. The Spanish sovereigns thus established in the New World a highly centralized government showing the characteristic features of the royal absolutisms then appearing in the new states of western Europe.

At first America seemed to offer few opportunities for the trader, as opposed to the simple plunderer, but enterprising persons presently found that trade here was possible and even profitable. The Spanish government therefore set up a "House of Trade" (*Casa de Contratación*) at Seville which was to conduct this trade for the benefit of Their Majesties (1503). Everything going to or coming out of America was to pass through its warehouses, and its agents were to do all the buying and selling, both in Europe and in America. Although it soon became evident that such governmental activity was impracticable, the *Casa* continued to regulate trade very autocratically, and for many years only members of the merchant guild at Seville were allowed to participate in the American trade. Moreover, taxes on this trade were so high and so oppressive that smugglers flourished, both in Europe and in the colonies, and the autocratic Spanish government eventually killed the goose that laid the golden egg.

**Autocratic
regulation
of trade**

The Spanish government also had to deal with the Indians. Columbus's first reports had suggested two policies, both of which were actually put into effect. First he spoke eloquently of the gentleness of the Indians and suggested that they might easily be Christianized: he thus inaugurated the myth of the "noble Red Man," which was to inspire European poets many years later. But this very gentleness also suggested that the Indians might be enslaved with equal ease. As a matter of fact, the Spaniards on Hispaniola began such enslavement

**Policies
toward
the Indians**

as early as 1494. Sometimes they used the slaves for work in mines and sometimes for agricultural labor. When the Indians showed a disinclination for such work, the government established (1503) the *encomienda* system, under which large estates, each containing several Indian villages, were assigned to a "protector" (*encomendero*), who Christianized and exploited the natives. Technically the Indians became serfs rather than slaves, but their "protectors" often resorted to extreme brutality in compelling them to work.

Negro
slaves
imported

As early as 1501 a few Negroes had been imported from Africa as slaves, and when they proved to be better workers than the Indians, they were brought in large numbers. The natives of the West Indies became extinct within half a century—partly from abuse, partly from new European diseases—and today the population of these islands is largely Negro. The Indians on the mainland were tougher, and they had long been accustomed to cruel exploitation by their Aztec or Inca overlords. The Spaniards therefore found them better adapted to labor under the *encomienda* system. Nevertheless, large numbers of Negroes were brought to South America, especially by the Portuguese. Today in the lands south of the Rio Grande, Indians and *mestizos* (mixed Indian and white) make up more than half the population, Negroes and mulattoes about one-sixth, and only a quarter are pure whites.

Bartolomé
de Las
Casas

Finally, the church always enjoyed a privileged position in the Spanish colonies. Both Queen Isabella, "the Catholic," and Columbus had looked forward to the conversion of the Indians, and in later times missionaries became quite powerful. Sometimes the methods they used were rather rough and ready, but not always. The most famous of the early churchmen in America was Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566), known as "the Apostle of the Indies." After a few years in Hispaniola, Las Casas became an *encomendero* in Cuba, but when he saw the effects of the system he gave up his properties and became a Dominican friar. It was largely because of his unwearying efforts that the *encomienda* system eventually was abolished, at least in name, though the Spaniards continued to exploit Indian labor outrageously.

Spanish
missions

Other missionaries, likewise filled with sympathy for the Indians, attempted to educate and train them for useful work—of course according to European ideas of what is useful work. It often happened, however, that after the Indians had been thus trained they became helplessly dependent upon their trainers, who were forced to look

after them. In later times the numerous missions, scattered across Latin America from Paraguay to California, often became virtual sweatshops where hundreds of Indians were autocratically ruled and exploited. Paraguay thus became the modern world's first "totalitarian" state, ruled by a few Jesuit missionaries.

Nevertheless, the beneficial side of the Spanish achievement must not be underestimated. The conquistadores were interested primarily in loot, and the conversion of Indians to Christianity often was very superficial, yet even in the sixteenth century the Spaniards did much to improve life in America. Through the next two centuries this progress continued at an accelerating rate. The missionaries introduced new methods of agriculture and new crops, improved native ones, and brought much new land under cultivation. Techniques in mining and other industries were improved. The new continent was rather thoroughly explored and careful surveys of the coasts made them safer for navigators. Scores of new cities were established, most of which were embellished with churches and other buildings of superior architectural merit. As late as 1800, Mexico City and Lima were the two finest cities in the New World. The first printing press in the Western Hemisphere was set up at Mexico City in 1535, the first university followed in 1551, and two centuries later there were a dozen universities in Latin America. By 1550 the age of the conquistadores was largely over, and the work of slowly civilizing the continent had begun.

**Spanish
civilization
in America**

41. TRADE AND STATECRAFT

*Supremacy
of the
Atlantic*

GEOGRAPHICAL discovery and the exploiting of overseas possessions brought fundamental changes in the commercial life of Europe, effecting what is often called "the commercial revolution." Throughout antiquity and the Middle Ages, the Mediterranean had carried western Europe's sea-borne trade. Hanseatic ships plied the North Sea and the Baltic, to be sure, and English traders followed the coast from Bristol to Bordeaux or even to Lisbon, but until the fourteenth century, when the Venetians began sending out their Flanders fleet, the open Atlantic was of little importance to Europe. In the sixteenth century, however, it gradually replaced the Mediterranean as the principal highway of European commerce. Old commercial centers, such as Genoa and Venice, Augsburg and Lübeck, fell into a slow decline, and commercial leadership passed to the new states along Europe's Atlantic seaboard. Spain and Portugal were the first to profit, with Seville and Lisbon, and later Antwerp, becoming the principal commercial cities of the West. Venice managed to preserve her trade with the eastern Mediterranean, but the Genoese were less fortunate, and during the next hundred years the Italian and German cities fell from their former glory.

*Royal
absolutism
and
mercantil-
ism*

While political power was thus following economic power, economic theory was following political theory. The new states which rose to prominence were national monarchies whose governments were dedicated to the principles of absolutism and state control. Following these same principles, the rulers of the new states tried to supervise and regulate the whole economic life of the nation. This policy is called "mercantilism," and during the next three centuries "mercantilist" principles dominated economic theory as completely as those of royal absolutism dominated political theory.

*Mercentilist
theory of
colonies*

At first mercantilist economists concerned themselves primarily with colonies and gold. Assuming that colonies existed only for the benefit of their mother country, they taught that their chief function was to provide gold and silver, raw materials, valuable exotic goods such as spices, native labor, and markets. Colonies were to be exploited as thoroughly as practicable. Under no circumstances should other European countries, or their citizens, be allowed a share in any of the benefits derived from a colony. Such monopolistic exploitation forced the Spanish government to set up the elaborate political and economic machinery described above, which retarded the healthy economic development of Spanish America and eventually became so cumbersome and unworkable that it ruined Spain herself. In the long run, Spanish economy suffered more harm from native smugglers than it did from Dutch and English pirates, but for a century or more the mercantilistic exploitation of her American colonies made Spain the richest and most powerful state in Europe.

*European
imports of
gold*

Mercantilist economists also taught that a nation's wealth is to be measured in terms of its gold supply. It is not difficult to see how this strange misconception arose. In the fifteenth century the Venetians and others had paid for their oriental silks and spices by exporting great quantities of gold and silver to the East. At the same time, all governments needed ample supplies of metallic money with which to pay their mercenary armies. They therefore hoarded gold. Europe consequently suffered from a serious shortage of the precious metals, which caused prices to decline and made business increasingly difficult. Then, when Columbus returned from his first voyage with fantastic stories and liberal samples of the gold of the New World, bright vistas of easy wealth suddenly opened. Columbus's second voyage took on the character of a "gold rush." There really was not much gold in Hispaniola, but the conquistadores soon began to loot the huge hoards of Mexico and Peru. Before this accumulated gold had all been carried away, rich mines had been discovered and were being worked with slave labor. Every year increasingly large shipments of the precious metals arrived in Spain, with the maximum not reached until the last decade of the sixteenth century.

THE HAPSBURG EMPIRE

During these crucial years Maximilian of Hapsburg was Holy Roman Emperor (1493-1519). We have seen (page 613) that his

Maximilian

father, Frederick III, had dreamed vast dreams about the future glory of the Hapsburgs, thinking in dynastic rather than nationalistic terms. One of his most momentous accomplishments was the marriage of his son Maximilian to Mary, daughter of Charles the Bold of Burgundy (1477). By this marriage the Hapsburgs acquired the Netherlands, which at that time were among the richest and most civilized parts of Europe; but unfortunately the legacy also included Charles the Bold's war with the kings of France. Franche-Comté, seized by Louis XI in 1477, was presently regained, and the hostility between the Hapsburgs and France continued for almost three hundred years.

**Opposed
to
nationalism**

Maximilian also inherited his father's belief in a dynastic Hapsburg state rather than a national German one. In fact, it would have been difficult for him to believe whole-heartedly in nationalism, for he ruled over Czechs, Hungarians, Burgundians, and Netherlanders as well as Germans, and he had no intention of surrendering any of them. Nevertheless, nationalistic feeling was rising in Germany, and Maximilian was constantly harassed by persons who wished to transform the Empire into a German national state. A number of administrative changes looked in this direction, the most spectacular of which was a new title for the Empire: it became "The Holy Roman Empire of the German People." In general, however, Maximilian resisted such demands and found support against princes and nationalists in a new nobility which he created for the purpose. His real ambitions were made manifest when he married his son Philip to Joanna, daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. His grandson, born to this pair in 1500, presently became emperor as Charles V (1519-1556), thus bringing the Hapsburg dynasty to its greatest glory.

**The
Emperor
Charles V**

When his father died (1506), the six-year-old Charles inherited the Netherlands and Franche-Comté, with Maximilian acting as regent and an aunt (Margaret of Austria, a very able woman) serving as vice-regent. Queen Isabella of Castile had died in 1504, leaving her crown to Joanna, but as that poor woman's mind was already deranged (she has gone down in history as "Joanna the Mad") her father, Ferdinand of Aragon, acted as regent in Castile until his death in 1516. Charles then became the first king of Spain—that is, of the united Castile and Aragon. When Maximilian died in 1519, Charles inherited the Hapsburg possessions and was crowned Holy Roman Emperor at Aachen (October, 1520). He ruled an empire such as no one man had ever ruled before: the Netherlands and Franche-Comté; Spain and her possessions in southern Italy, Sicily, northern



CHARLES V, Painting by Titian. (Bettmann Archive)

Africa, and the Americas; Austria and the Hapsburg territories in southern Germany; and, as emperor, the whole of Germany together with large parts of northern Italy, Bohemia, and Hungary.

Having been born at Ghent, Charles considered the Netherlands his home, and his Dutch subjects accepted him as a Fleming, but his non-Dutch subjects often regarded him as a foreigner. He spoke French and Flemish as a child, he knew Latin of course, but only as a grown man did he learn Spanish imperfectly, and he never learned German at all. In his early years, his most trusted advisers were either Flemings or Burgundians, but later he preferred Spaniards. When Charles first visited Spain, eighteen months after he became its king, his subjects greeted him with an insurrection, and peace was restored only after he had promised to learn Spanish, to appoint only Spaniards

**His
position
in Spain**

to offices in the kingdom, and to respect all the ancient laws and customs of Spain. Thereafter he scrupulously consulted the *córtes* from time to time, and though he and his ministers devoted great labor to amalgamating the governments of Castile and Aragon, he made no attempt to integrate the administration of Spain with that of other parts of the Empire. Spain, the most important of his possessions, remained a separate and independent national state. Finding that he had no time to look after the Hapsburg territories in central Europe, Charles appointed his younger brother, Ferdinand, regent over them (1521), and his aunt, Margaret of Austria, continued as regent of the Netherlands. Charles was thus left free to devote his attention to Spain and the Empire. Highly intelligent, industrious, and serious, educated in the spirit of the northern Renaissance, and a firm Catholic, Charles recast the Empire and made Spain the first power in Europe.

**Charles
and the
Fuggers**

Charles shared the dynastic ideas of his father and grandfather, Frederick and Maximilian, but new conditions caused him to develop rather different views regarding the Empire. Bankers had by this time begun to play almost as important a role in politics as did feudal princes. When Maximilian died in 1519, the Medici bankers of Florence (including their kinsman, Pope Leo X) put forward Francis I of France as a candidate for the emperorship while their principal rivals, the Fuggers of Augsburg, supported Charles. Each side spent money lavishly to bribe electors, and Charles's election was widely hailed as a victory of the Fuggers over the Medici. The Fuggers profited greatly from their victory, for Charles worked with them throughout his reign, granted them vast holdings in Spain, and gave them a share in the wealth of Mexico and Peru. These bankers had recently made Antwerp a commercial and financial center, the point whence the spices brought from the East Indies by the Portuguese were distributed to Europe, where cloth was bought and sold in the greatest quantities, where money was borrowed in the largest amounts, and where international debts were the most easily paid. Charles planned to make his political empire, centering in the Netherlands, a parallel to this empire of the Antwerp bankers, and to finance it with the gold of the Americas.

**Other
bankers
hostile**

This great expansion of the Hapsburg domains, the increase in their military and financial power, and their mercantilist economic policies frightened the statesmen and bankers of other states. Venetian traders and Florentine bankers had especially strong reasons for concern. Portuguese merchants, backed by German and Dutch bankers,

were already giving Italians serious competition in the lucrative spice trade, and imperial bankers were successfully invading Italy itself. Not being disposed to give up without a struggle, these Italian bankers therefore backed Charles's enemies and urged a "balance of power" to prevent further imperial aggrandizement.

This famous doctrine of the balance of power, which played a great role in European diplomacy thereafter, had been devised by Italians during their wars with each other. Accepting the existence of many independent and sovereign states, diplomats tried to arrange them in more or less permanent alliances, professing to seek a stable balance but each really hoping that his own side would be a little the stronger. If such a balance prevailed, it was said, no one would attack a member of the opposing coalition, and peace would prevail. Then as always, however, this doctrine of peace through a balance of power proved to be a snare and a delusion. Coalitions were always fragile, allies deserted each other—sometimes in the midst of a war, or even of a campaign, or occasionally of a battle—and various powers stirred up trouble for their allies in order to exact higher prices for their friendship. Rivalry between Charles and his enemies therefore kept Europe in confusion during the crucial years of the Protestant revolt and the opening up of the New World.

Charles's most important rival was Francis I of France (1515–1547). Good-looking, of quick intelligence, and gallant in his manners, Francis knew how to make himself popular, while his interest in letters and art fitted him to be king during the height of the French Renaissance. But his character was fundamentally frivolous, he was dominated by his mistresses, and he preferred hunting or games to more serious work. Like Charles V, he depended upon his bankers, especially the Medici and other Italian firms long established at Lyons—even going so far as to marry his son, later Henry II, to Catherine de' Medici. As soon as he came to the throne, Francis resumed the Italian wars, retaking Milan in 1515, and exacting from Leo X the Concordat of 1516 (see page 668), by which he gained great power over the French church.

Francis resumed hostilities in 1521 and spent the rest of his life in a succession of wars with Charles, using Italy as the principal field of battle. In 1525 he was badly defeated and taken prisoner at Pavia, where he signed a treaty that he repudiated as soon as he was released. Within a few months he had organized a league of Italian states, including Milan, Venice, Florence, and the pope (Clement VII,

**A balance
of power
sought**

**Francis I
of France**

**Charles's
wars with
Francis**

a Medici), against which Charles V sent Spanish armies into Italy. In May, 1527, these imperial armies scandalized Europe by sacking Rome, taking the pope prisoner, and holding several cardinals for ransom. Two years later another peace was signed, the Medici were again restored to Florence (after a siege of eight months) and the Sforzas to Milan. Clement crowned Charles king of Lombardy (1530). War soon broke out again, however, and only after the death of both protagonists did the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) end this struggle between the Hapsburgs and the Valois. The French renounced their Italian claims and the Hapsburgs promised to forget the lost portion of Burgundy. Naples and Milan remained in Spanish hands, and from them Spain dominated Italy for more than two hundred years.

**Suleiman
the
Magnificent**

The wars in Italy were not Charles's sole tribulation. The eastern frontier of the Empire also required constant attention. The famous Turkish sultan, Suleiman "the Magnificent" (1520–1566; see page 343), assumed power only a year after Charles became emperor, and at once he launched his career of conquest. The very next year he captured Belgrade (now the capital of Yugoslavia), and after several raids into Hungary he defeated and killed the Hungarian king at Mohács (1526). Rival factions chose Ferdinand (brother of Charles V) and a Hungarian prince respectively as king, and for many years Hungary was the scene of a three-sided war. Suleiman besieged Vienna itself in the fall of 1529, but a temporary peace was signed four years later, with both kings of Hungary paying tribute to the Turk. Meantime Francis I, who called himself the "Most Christian King of France," had been busily trying to redress the European balance of power with a Turkish alliance. A treaty was finally announced in 1536, and all Europe was scandalized at this cynical betrayal of Christianity—even though several other rulers, including Pope Alexander VI, had already made alliances with the infidel Turks against Christian foes. Suleiman needed no French prodding, however, and for many years he raided Hungary at frequent intervals.

**Charles's
troubles
in
Germany**

Meantime Charles V was having trouble with the lesser nobility of Germany. Inspired by both political and religious motives, they organized a league (1531) and waged civil war against him (1546–1547; see page 685). Moreover, the rise of Protestantism was a grievous blow to Charles's plans, for by tearing the church asunder it robbed the Empire of a strong bond of unity. Discouraged by these various mishaps, Charles finally gave up, and in 1556 he formally

abdicated. Spain, the Italian possessions (both Naples and Milan), and the Netherlands were given to his son Philip, while the title of Emperor and the German possessions went to Ferdinand, who had long been ruling Austria. The Hapsburg family thus fell into two parts, Spanish and Austrian, though the two branches usually coöperated during the next hundred years. Charles withdrew to a monastery in Spain, where he died two years later, aged fifty-eight years.

Philip II of Spain

Under Philip II (1556-1598) Spain was clearly the leading power in Europe. Gold and silver came from America in ever increasing quantities, enabling Philip to support the largest and best armies in Europe, to subsidize his allies heavily, and to maintain unprecedented splendor at home. The years between 1560 and 1660 were indeed Spain's *siglo de oro*—her "golden century"—yet events were soon to show that her glory had been built upon the sands. Even before Philip's death, symptoms of decay were everywhere in evidence, and the northern nations—Holland, England, France—were assuming commercial and political leadership in the West.

**Spain's
"golden
century"**

Philip II was one of the great kings of history—though certainly not an admirable one. He approached his duties most seriously, he worked hard at his daily tasks, and he had the best intentions in the world. Yet he failed in nearly every one of his great undertakings, and historians often attribute Spain's misfortunes to his personal shortcomings, or even to his perverse virtues. Philip was a glum and morose recluse, shy and awkward in society, and utterly humorless. He trusted no one. He made up his mind slowly, but when he had once come to a decision nothing could convince him that he had been mistaken—not even so great a disaster as the loss of his "Invincible Armada." He insisted upon reading and annotating all correspondence and official documents himself, and though he spent long hours at his desk every day, ambassadors sometimes had to wait as much as eight months for replies to important dispatches. Philip made himself into an assiduous and faithful bureaucrat rather than a king.

Philip II

There can be no doubt that Philip was a deeply religious man, gifted with a delicate conscience, but his religion was of the austere and somber sort that was often produced by Puritanism and the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Historians have sometimes likened him to John Calvin or Savonarola. It is equally certain that he firmly be-

**His
religious
policies**



PHILIP II, Painting by Titian. (Pitti Palace, Florence)

lieved that the salvation of the human race required the restoration of religious unity in Europe. He therefore became the chief protagonist of the Counter-Reformation, a bigot who was determined to stamp out Protestantism and infidelity at any cost. He even found a grim satisfaction in watching the burning of heretics, which he regarded as a religious duty. Nevertheless, he dominated the Catholic Church in Spain more arbitrarily and more successfully than Henry VIII or Elizabeth dominated the Anglican Church. In case of need

he pushed the pope to one side, and he never allowed his religion to interfere with his politics or his private morals. In the end, he became the ghastly caricature of a Christian king, a man who fanatically believed that the primary purpose of religion, economics, politics, and everything else was to promote the ancient Hapsburg dream of empire.

Though born at Valladolid in 1527 and raised largely at Toledo, he was in Flanders when his father abdicated (1556), and he did not

*The
Escorial*



ESCORIAL

return to Spain until 1559. He never left his native land again. A year after his return to Spain he established his capital at Madrid, which heretofore had been only a fortress at a rather uninviting spot. Around this royal court the nobility of Spain soon congregated, thereby bringing a new city into existence. Philip's reclusive nature made him uncomfortable in society, however, and as early as 1563 he began building the Escorial in a dreary waste some thirty miles away. This huge structure, half-palace and half-monastery, became the king's principal residence. Here he worked all day in a tiny cell provided with a window through which he could watch Mass being celebrated at the high altar of the magnificent church. Here he died, and here he and most of his successors on the throne of Spain have been buried.



ESCORIAL, FAÇADE OF CHURCH

**Troubles
with the
Moslems**

Philip inherited his father's war with France, and in the opening years of his reign Spanish and English armies inflicted two severe defeats upon the enemy. The French king then signed the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559), but it was not long before Philip found himself engaged in new conflicts. Deferring for a moment his troubles with the Dutch and the English, we may begin with his wars against various Moslems. It was estimated that, after the fall of Granada in 1492, Spain had half a million Moslem citizens, most of whom were

presently baptized and scattered through her various provinces. Fanatics resented their presence, however, and loudly accused them of secretly perpetuating various infidel practices (notably, bathing) which devout Spaniards saw fit to regard as calculated insults to the Christian religion. Philip had no sooner reached Spain than church authorities began urging him to take action against these "Moriscos." In spite of his bigotry, Philip at first hesitated (the Moriscos were diligent workers and paid him a large special tribute) but in the end he ordered the Inquisition to proceed against them. The ensuing persecution was so brutal that the Moriscos rose in revolt (1569), receiving valuable aid from Islamic kinsmen in North Africa. One thing led to another until Philip found himself at war with the sultan of Turkey. In 1571 his illegitimate half-brother, Don Juan of Austria, won a famous naval battle off Lepanto (in Greece), but the Turks soon rallied, and three years later they regained Tunis, taken by Charles V in 1535. Throughout the remainder of the century Moslem corsairs inflicted severe punishment upon Spanish shipping in the western Mediterranean.

Philip's next move was only slightly more fortunate. In 1578 King Sebastian of Portugal, disregarding the advice of his chastened colleague Philip, launched a great crusade against the Moors and soon was killed in action. As he left no direct heir, the throne passed to his great-uncle, Cardinal Henry, who died two years later. Seven candidates for the throne then presented themselves, the chief of them being Philip II, whose mother had been a Portuguese princess. Spanish armies sent to support his candidacy met little organized resistance, and he became Philip I of Portugal (1580). The world's two great colonial empires were thus united, the spices of the East intermingling with the gold and silver of the Americas. It seemed that Philip must possess wealth beyond the dreams of avarice. This happy consummation never took place, however, and the union merely brought trouble to Philip and his successors. The two countries were never united, either economically, administratively, or emotionally, and the Portuguese seized the first favorable opportunity to regain their independence (1640).

**Annexation
of Portugal
(1580)**

Misfortune also dogged Philip's every move in Italy. The Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) supposedly left him all-powerful there, and while he met little opposition except from Venice, he soon found that his acquisition was of less value than he had anticipated. The wars had reduced Italy to a wretchedness and poverty from which she did

**Pathetic
state of
Italy**

not recover for three hundred years; the trade of her great cities was gone because of the new trade routes; and the inspiration of her intellectual and artistic life had been stamped out by the Counter-Reformation and the Inquisition. Italy was too exhausted to rebel, however, and for many years she silently endured the peace of death.

**And
Germany**

The state of Germany under the Austrian Hapsburgs was almost as sad. Here too cities had been robbed of their trade by the commercial revolution, and though the countryside had not yet been so thoroughly ravished by war as in Italy, the attacks of the Turks had drained off Austria's wealth and military power. After the abdication of Charles V, his brother Ferdinand became Holy Roman Emperor (1556-1564). Ferdinand's son and his two grandsons then ruled in turn, but their principal achievement was the loss of most of Hungary to the Turks. After the Treaty of Augsburg (1555), quarrels between Catholics and Protestants in Germany died down to some extent, largely because both factions were suffering severely from economic, intellectual, and spiritual anemia, but the slaughter was to be resumed as soon as the contestants had regained their strength.

The Dutch Netherlands




**The Neth-
erlands
in 1556**

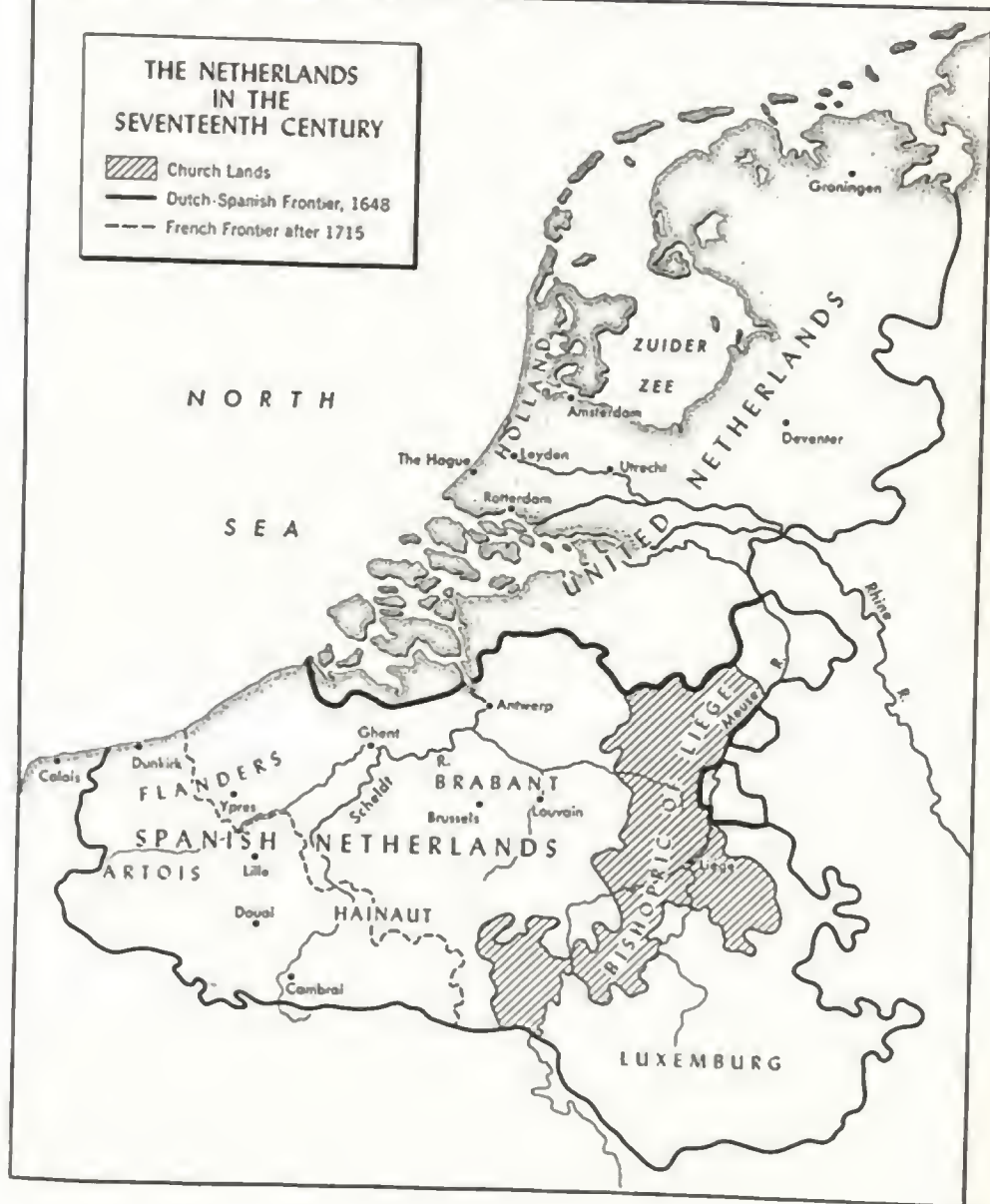
At this time the Netherlands consisted of seventeen separate provinces that now form Holland, Belgium, Luxembourg, and a little of northeastern France. Speaking various dialects of Dutch or French, and being united only by allegiance to the duke of Burgundy, the population had as yet developed little national sentiment. Nevertheless, these provinces were the richest and most cultured in northern Europe, and when Charles V abdicated in 1556, he found it hard to decide whether they should go to Philip or to Ferdinand. In the end, he favored Philip, partly perhaps because of the close connections between the Antwerp bankers and the Spanish government. This decision had disastrous consequences both for Spain and for the Netherlands.

**Rebellion
against
Philip**

Charles had been accepted by his Flemish subjects as a good Fleming, but his son, a thorough Spaniard, was regarded by them as a foreigner whose authoritarian nature made him an odious tyrant. Charles had allowed the people of the Netherlands to live under their ancestral laws and customs, administered by their own officials, but Philip soon began stationing Spanish troops in the country and sending Spaniards to introduce Spanish institutions, notably the Inquisi-

THE NETHERLANDS IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

-  Church Lands
-  Dutch-Spanish Frontier, 1648
-  French Frontier after 1715



tion. By centralizing the administration of both church and state, he antagonized Dutch leaders in each field, and his seizure of monastery lands caused especial trouble with the church. In spite of the execution of a certain number of Protestants, Calvinism had entered the provinces in the last years of Charles V, and Philip's centralizing policies caused many dissatisfied leaders to adopt that heresy. Philip then undertook to drown the new religion in blood. And lastly, Philip regarded the Netherlands as a sort of colony, imposing mercantilistic restrictions upon its foreign trade and heavily taxing its industry. Philip's bigotry and tyranny quickly aroused a spirit of national resentment among his subjects, and within a few years rebellion broke out.

**Alva's
bloody
rule
(1567-
1573)**

The first open revolt came in 1566. A group of about three hundred nobles, including both Catholics and Protestants, petitioned for redress of grievances, but before a reply could be received, mobs ran amuck in Antwerp and other cities, desecrating and robbing Catholic churches. The infuriated Philip sent the Duke of Alva with twenty thousand Spanish soldiers to punish the rebels. The bloodthirsty duke fully lived up to his master's expectations. His tribunal for trying rebels was popularly called the "Council of Blood," and the six years of his rule (1567-1573) are among the most horrifying in modern history—unparalleled, perhaps, until our own day. Alva boasted that he had caused the death of eighteen thousand heretics—though he may have exaggerated the number somewhat in order to curry favor with his master Philip II. Other thousands had their property confiscated, and it has been estimated that at least 100,000 persons fled to Germany or England.

**William
of Orange**

Among the Dutch rebels were two Catholic nobles, the count of Egmont and William of Nassau, prince of Orange, who is often called "William the Silent." Egmont was executed by Alva (1568), thereby becoming a national hero, but William became leader of the revolutionists, and in 1573 he declared himself a Calvinist as well. His small army gave Alva little trouble, but the privateers and corsairs whom he sent to prey on Spanish shipping became a serious matter. Being much more skillful mariners than the Spaniards, these "Sea Beggars" inflicted heavy losses upon them, not only in the North Sea and the English Channel but eventually in the open Atlantic and in the Caribbean as well. At last Alva admitted failure, and in 1573 he was recalled at his own request. Three years later the unpaid Spanish troops mutinied and wrought fearful damage in Antwerp—the "Spanish Fury" of 1576. Leaders from all seventeen provinces then met at

Ghent, where they agreed to coöperate in expelling the hated Spanish troops from the Netherlands. Concessions made by the Spaniards were inadequate, and three years later the seven northern provinces bound themselves by the Union of Utrecht (1579) to seek independence from Spain. In 1581 they declared the Netherlands an independent state.

Meantime, a new governor, the Duke of Parma (1578–1592), had been sent to pacify the rebellious provinces, using military force but avoiding the terrorism that had characterized Alva's regime. He was moderately successful in the southern provinces, but in the north he could do little. William of Orange's "Sea Beggars" had captured the cities along the western coast of the provinces of Zeeland and Holland as early as 1574. Being cut off from the south by rivers and lakes, these cities had a strong military position and could dominate most of the northern Netherlands. They now became the fortress of those who demanded complete independence from Spain. By 1588, however, Parma had reduced everything south of the great rivers, and was preparing a great campaign into the north, when other events forced him to desist. Philip II, having built his "Invincible Armada," ordered Parma to prepare most of his troops for the contemplated invasion of England; and after the loss of the Armada, Parma was ordered to intervene in French affairs (see pages 754 and 758). Several years were thus lost during which Maurice of Nassau (son of William of Orange, who had been assassinated in 1584) upset Parma's carefully prepared arrangements, liberating and fortifying extensive territories south of the rivers. The war then degenerated into a stalemate.

North and south had been equally active in the early stages of the rebellion against Spain, and in so far as religion played a part, there were no territorial differences. Calvinism had won less than 10 percent of the people in 1566, and while these converts were concentrated in the cities, they were distributed rather evenly in both the north and the south. The educated upper classes, who supplied the first leaders, had been brought up to practice the toleration urged by Erasmus. Catholics and Protestants alike resented the Inquisition and were scandalized by Alva's bloody excesses. During Alva's reign of terror, however, thousands of Protestants had fled from the south to the cities of Holland, where they and their coreligionists became the backbone of the opposition to Spain. Though still a minority, these ardent Calvinists presently came to dominate the government, they "purified" church buildings by whitewashing them

**Parma in
the south**

**Religious
division**

after knocking down the "idols," and eventually they converted the northern provinces to Protestantism—sometimes by strong-arm methods. Parma, on the other hand, introduced some of the better features of the Counter-Reformation into the provinces under his control, and as the Protestant leaders had by this time been killed or had fled, he eventually made the south staunchly Catholic.

*Prosperity
of the
north*

The wars also exercised a profound influence upon the economic life of the Netherlands. Heretofore the southern provinces had been the wealthier, with Antwerp and Ghent two of the most important cities of northern Europe, but the wars were disastrous. The cities of the south were sacked, most of the fighting took place in this part of the country, unpaid and mutinous Spanish soldiers plundered the countryside, skilled workers emigrated by the thousand, and, above all, William of Orange destroyed Antwerp's trade by capturing the mouth of the Scheldt River. When the ten southern provinces were exhausted, they made peace with Parma, but they did not thereby regain their old economic leadership or even their old prosperity. The trading cities of Holland, on the other hand, grew rich during the war. They inherited the trade of Antwerp, the "Sea Beggars" brought captured treasure, and emigrants from the south introduced new technical skills and new industries. Holland became the richest province in the Netherlands. When Philip II became king of Portugal (1580), he closed the harbor of Lisbon to the Dutch rebels, who thereupon by-passed Lisbon and sailed directly to the East Indies. Before many years had passed they had virtually eliminated their Portuguese rivals from the East and had laid the foundations of their own vast empire in Ceylon, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and the Moluccas. Perhaps the organization of the Dutch East India Company in 1602 should be taken as the beginning of this empire. During the war the Dutch also snatched a few islands in the West Indies from Spain.

*Independ-
ence of
the Dutch
republic*

After the death of Philip II (1598) the Spaniards were bankrupt, war-weary, and leaderless. During the next few years they attempted to reach an understanding with the northern provinces, using southern leaders as cat's-paws and invoking the unity of the Netherlands. Their efforts were in vain, however, for they were still unwilling to guarantee toleration to the extreme Calvinists who dominated the north. The Netherlands was thus gradually split in two, with the dividing line where the military frontier happened to be. At last negotiations with Spain were opened, and in 1609 a "Twelve Years' Truce" was signed. Desultory fighting was resumed at its expiration, but the

Spanish made no headway, and in 1648 they formally recognized Dutch independence, more than half a century after it had become an accomplished fact. Thereafter the seven northern provinces made up the Dutch republic or (after 1815) the kingdom of the Netherlands, while the ten southern provinces were known as the Spanish Netherlands, or the Austrian Netherlands (after 1713), or (after 1831) as the kingdom of Belgium.

ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

When Elizabeth became Queen of England in 1558, this daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn was twenty-five years old, tall, good-looking, and intelligent, and long years of persecution and intrigue had trained her to dissimulate well. She was determined to rule England herself, but she was wise enough to listen carefully to the advice of ministers who wished to perpetuate Tudor absolutism. Their political ideal was a "well-ordered state" in which everyone skillfully performed the tasks assigned to his social class while enjoying the blessings of peace abroad and tranquillity at home. Inspired by this ideal, Elizabeth and a number of brilliant assistants made the forty-five years of her reign (1558-1603) one of the great periods in English history.

**Queen
Elizabeth I**

Elizabeth ruled an England that was prosperous and enjoying rapid economic advance. This improvement was in part a result of the seizure of church lands by Henry VIII and Edward VI. The old monks knew little of the new farming methods developed during the hundred years preceding the Reformation, and they were notoriously backward in the cultivation of their vast estates. Even before 1537, however, monastic lands had sometimes been leased by laymen, who improved them and used better methods of cultivation; and after they had been taken over by the king, they were rented or sold or given to men who were anxious and able to introduce the new agriculture. The agricultural production of England therefore began to increase. By 1600 English farms were able to feed a population of over 4,500,000 persons, which represented an increase of more than 750,000, or about 20 percent, over that of 1500. Moreover, a much larger number of these persons belonged to the non-farming population, and cities grew correspondingly. In 1500, for example, London had a population of barely 50,000 persons; in 1563 this figure stood at 93,000; in 1595 it was 152,000; and by 1605 it had risen to 224,000.

**Progress in
agriculture**



QUEEN ELIZABETH, Standing on a Map of England. (National Portrait Gallery, London)

**Industrial
progress**

Before long the men who were prospering so richly from the monastery lands began seeking opportunities to invest the new capital they were accumulating. The result was that English industry, which hitherto had lagged far behind that of many parts of Europe, now began to advance rapidly under the leadership of these aggressive men. New industries were introduced into England, old industries were reinvigorated by the adoption of techniques learned abroad, and new technical methods were invented. England thus took her first steps toward becoming the "workshop of the world." The industrial advance brought a great increase in foreign trade, both with old centers like Flanders and with new areas, and much more than formerly this

commerce was carried in English ships. Credit for the commercial advance is sometimes given to the "Elizabethan sea dogs," such as Drake and Hawkins, who preyed upon the Spanish treasure ships, but this version of the story is untenable. Piracy contributed relatively little to England's prosperity. On the contrary, this piracy is merely one more indication of the aggressive enthusiasm of Elizabethan Englishmen.

In spite of this great economic advance, or perhaps because of it, Elizabeth always was in financial difficulties. The treasury was empty when she became queen, and prices were rising rapidly because of the "price revolution" induced by Spain's new hoards of gold and silver. The new leaders of England's economic life were strong and aggressive men who paid taxes only with great reluctance. Elizabeth therefore was never able to increase the revenue as rapidly as prices rose, and she staved off bankruptcy only by exercising the utmost parsimony.

*Elizabeth's
financial
difficulties*

Rising prices also brought great distress to the poor, as is witnessed by Elizabeth's various Poor Laws and Vagrancy Laws. The science of economics being as yet unborn, moralists from the well-to-do classes attributed the prevailing high prices to the greed and laziness of the poor, which they sought to remedy with laws that compelled beggars to work, required the training of more apprentices, and fixed maximum wages. These laws brought great suffering, but of course they did not check the inflation. At the same time, however, the middle and upper classes were prosperous, and their exuberant joy expressed itself in the enthusiasm and reckless daring for which Elizabethan England is famous.

*Sufferings
of the
poor*

Another set of problems clustered around the church. Elizabeth's religious nature was underdeveloped, to say the least, and she always regarded religion from a purely political point of view. She certainly was no bigot. Early in her reign she and her advisers worked out a system, known as the Elizabethan settlement (see page 695), to which she demanded outward conformity and which, for a time at least, seemed to satisfy an overwhelming majority of the English people. She had little need to enforce conformity by persecution.

*Elizabeth's
religious
settlement*

The first overt opposition to Elizabeth broke out in the northern counties in 1569. The leaders of this rebellion were the last representatives of the old pre-Tudor nobility, who thus made a rather despairing effort to beat down their upstart rivals and to regain the "liberties" enjoyed by their class before and during the Wars of the Roses. They

*Rebels in
the north*

attracted recruits largely by emphasizing the economic misery of the peasants and by promising a return to the good old times. Though their motives were largely political and economic, they exploited religion by painting crosses on their standards and by professing to fight for the Catholic faith. Nevertheless, the rebels were easily defeated, and about eight hundred of the rank and file were executed. The leaders escaped to Scotland or the Continent.

**Seminary
priests and
Jesuits**

At this moment Philip II and the Catholic Counter-Reformation were enjoying great success in Europe, and strenuous attempts were made to bring England into the Catholic fold. A papal bull of 1570 excommunicated Elizabeth together with all who adhered to her and released her subjects from all bonds of loyalty. Few persons paid any attention to the bull, whose importance lay largely in the unmistakable proof it gave of the pope's powerlessness over English Catholics. Since that day no pope has seriously attempted to depose a temporal sovereign. Shortly before this fiasco, in 1568, a group of English Catholics, led by a certain William Allen, had set up a college at Douai in the Netherlands. Its members made the Douai translation of the Latin Bible (see page 709) which, in a revised version, is still official for English-speaking Catholics. The college also trained priests, who were sent to reconvert and minister to the English people. Closely associated with these "seminary priests" were two Jesuits, Edmund Campion (1540-1581) and Robert Parsons (1546-1610). The former, a high-minded enthusiast, was captured and hanged for sedition, but Parsons, a plotter and intriguer, escaped to the Continent, where he continued his plots as a protégé of Philip II. During the next few years there were several attempts to murder Elizabeth. Needless to say, these attempts on Elizabeth's life gave all Catholics, but especially the Jesuits, a very bad reputation in England.

Mary Queen of Scots and the Armada

**Hostility of
both Spain
and France**

Elizabeth would undoubtedly have preferred a peaceful foreign policy, but in the world of her day peace was impossible. She had scarcely ascended the throne when she received a proposal of marriage from Philip II, then a widower of only a few days' standing. A few weeks after her refusal, he took a French princess as his third wife. Throughout the remainder of their reigns, the Spanish and English monarchs were constantly quarreling, but during the first ten years their controversies did not become acute. At first relations with

France were more difficult, for the two countries were still at war when Elizabeth became queen. The Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis was negotiated a few months later, but during the 1560's and the early 1570's developments in France were such that Elizabeth could not ignore them.

More important still were England's relations with Scotland. Ever since the early days of the Hundred Years' War Scotland had been an ally of France, always ready to attack England from the north. Henry VII had attempted to end this situation by marrying his daughter Margaret to the Scottish king, and though Henry VIII had in his last days thought of acquiring Scotland, either by marriage or by war, his plans were not carried out. In 1538 Margaret's son, James V of Scotland, had married Mary of Guise, the daughter of a powerful French family. After James's death four years later, Mary ruled Scotland as regent for eighteen years (1542-1560), always in the interests of France. Their daughter, later known as Mary Queen of Scots (1542-1587), was educated at the French court, and in 1558 she was married to the sickly and feeble-minded youth who ruled France for about eighteen months as Francis II (1559-1560). Her mother having died a few months before her husband, Mary returned to Scotland to become its queen (1561), and soon she was engulfed in a sea of troubles.

**Mary
Queen
of Scots**

Mary's misfortunes were due in part to her own character, but to a greater extent they were political. Like all the members of the Guise family, Mary was an ardent Catholic; and being the granddaughter of Margaret Tudor, she was Elizabeth's cousin and next in line for the English throne. In 1558 English Catholics had wished to have her as their queen rather than Elizabeth, but Philip II, in spite of his bigotry, preferred England ruled by a Protestant rather than under a Catholic ally of his French rival. Nevertheless, when her husband became king of France, Mary began calling herself "Queen of England and Scotland," and after Francis's death, when Mary was no longer queen of France, Philip began backing her candidacy for the English throne. Elizabeth therefore always regarded Mary as a dangerous rival.

**Backed by
Philip II**

Mary's Catholicism made her equally unacceptable to the Scots. They were by this time extreme Presbyterians under the leadership of the dour John Knox, who had already attacked Mary of Guise in a resounding pamphlet entitled *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). Mary's ardent tempera-

**Executed by
Elizabeth**

ment and her many indiscretions made Knox's task the easier. She married her cousin, Lord Darnley, who was presently murdered under shocking circumstances. Mary then married James Bothwell, the reckless and romantic roué who had perpetrated the murder. This was too much for the Scots, who forced her to abdicate (1567). The throne descended to her infant son by Darnley, James VI, who later became James I of England. Mary then fled to England, where she passed the remaining nineteen years of her life as a prisoner of Elizabeth. During these years several Catholics plotted to liberate her, after murdering Elizabeth, and to put her on the English throne. At last, however, the death of William of Orange (1584) convinced Elizabeth that her own life would never be safe while Mary lived, and she regretfully signed the death sentence. Mary was beheaded early in 1587.

**Drake and
Hawkins**

Meantime Philip's troubles in the Netherlands had been increasing, and when Alva closed the Dutch ports to English ships, the wool trade suffered severely. In retaliation, Elizabeth gave quiet encouragement to the English privateers who, for some years past, had been preying upon Spanish shipping after the manner of the Dutch "Sea Beggars." The most famous of these pirates were Hawkins and Drake, and the greatest achievement of the latter was his circumnavigation of the globe (1577-1580), from which he returned with an enormous cargo of loot taken from the Spaniards. When Philip's protests were met with evasive answers, and Elizabeth began giving aid more openly to the Dutch rebels, Philip decided that the English must be brought to heel.

**The Spanish
Armada**

The last act of the great struggle between the two monarchs centered around Philip's "Invincible Armada." While this great fleet was under construction, Drake boldly sailed into the harbor at Cadiz and destroyed a good part of it (1587). A year later, however, the Armada was ready. It consisted of about 130 ships, carrying 19,000 soldiers and 8000 sailors. Philip planned to have it pick up large armies in the Netherlands and ferry them across to England. The English made hurried preparations to meet the Armada, and though their ships were smaller, they were more easily maneuvered and they were commanded by captains whose earlier training as pirates now stood them in good stead.

**Its
destruction
(1588)**

When the Armada entered the Channel, in July, 1588, the English made frequent and effective hit-and-run attacks, but they refused a major engagement. The Spaniards then sought refuge in the harbor

at Calais until English fire ships forced them out. Before the panic-stricken commanders could get their ships in line once more, the English swooped down upon them and inflicted crippling damage. A storm did the rest. After the Spanish fleet had been driven far into the North Sea, many of its ships were wrecked on the coasts of Scotland and Ireland while returning to Spain. Less than half of the Invincible Armada reached home, but it is said that England's total losses amounted to one ship and about a hundred men.

Even this disaster did not deter Philip from trying again. He never completed his second Armada, but he was rather successful in stirring up trouble for Elizabeth among the Catholics of Ireland. In spite of all these losses, however, Spain was still the richest and most powerful country in the world, with an empire that circled the globe and an army that was the terror of Europe. England, on the other hand, was still an upstart nation with an empty treasury, a makeshift navy, and no army worth mentioning.

Perhaps Europe was not adequately impressed, but English morale was boosted mightily by the destruction of the Armada. The remaining fifteen years of Elizabeth's long reign saw brilliant bursts of activity in nearly every field of endeavor. Patriotism and the general enthusiasm swept most of the remaining English Catholics into the Anglican Church. Drake and his fellows continued their attacks upon the Spanish treasure ships. Sir Walter Raleigh and others began planning an English empire in North America. And at this time came that flowering of English literature that has immortalized the Elizabethan age.

*Spain still
a great
power*

*Enthusiasm
of the
English*

THE WARS OF RELIGION IN FRANCE

Francis I of France was followed by his son, Henry II (1547-1559), who effected the final union of Brittany with France, occupied three bishoprics (Metz, Toul, Verdun) formerly held by Charles V, regained Calais (the last foothold of the English in France), and concluded the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis with the Hapsburgs. Shortly after signing this treaty Henry died and was succeeded by his three sons in turn, Francis II (1559-1560), Charles IX (1560-1574), and Henry III (1574-1589). None of the three was a man of intelligence or strong character and, as none left an heir, the Valois dynasty perished with Henry III. Throughout their lives these three last Valois were dominated by their mother, Catherine de' Medici—or de Médicis,

*The last
Valois
kings*

as she was called in France—who died only in 1589, just a few months before her youngest son. In France, as everywhere else, economic conditions kept the royal treasury empty and caused the people great suffering, with rival leaders exploiting these misfortunes as best they could. As sixteenth-century idealism still prevailed, religion was often invoked as a superb pretext for slaughter, and the civil wars of this period are usually known as the Wars of Religion.

**Protestants
and
Bourbons**

At first Protestantism entered France rather slowly, but toward the middle of the century Calvinism began making rapid progress among the lesser nobility. These nobles sometimes put Protestant ministers in their village churches, but except in southern France the reformed religion never won a large section of the peasantry. In the towns, on the other hand, Protestantism became popular with the skilled laborers, but its success with the unskilled was slight. Perhaps a fifth of the people of France were Protestants during the 1560's and 1570's. Politically they were led by the Bourbon family of Navarre, who, as the sole surviving descendants of Louis IX, were destined to inherit the throne of France if the Valois dynasty became extinct.

**Catholics
led by
the Guise
family**

At the opposite extreme, religiously and politically, stood the Guise family of Lorraine, whose leaders made the most of Catholicism. The Duke of Guise had won a name for himself by capturing Calais from the English; his brother (the cardinal of Lorraine) was the leading churchman in France; and when his niece (Mary Queen of Scots) married the future Francis II, the duke seemed destined to become the actual ruler of France.

Politiques

Between these two factions stood the numerous moderate Catholics who still talked about the "Gallican liberties" of the French church, who opposed papal pretensions, and who preferred peace and a strong monarchy to either Protestantism or Catholicism. They were known as the "Politiques," they were disposed to favor whatever man was the lawful king, and in general it was to them that Catherine and her sons looked for support.

**St. Bartholomew's
Day,
1572**

The Wars of Religion began in 1562 with a brawl in which henchmen of the Duke of Guise killed over fifty Protestants. The Duke was later assassinated. During the next several years there was much desultory fighting between armed bands of Catholics and Protestants, and the leaders of the two extreme parties sought the aid of Philip II and Elizabeth respectively. Catherine veered now one way and now the other, but early in the 1570's she turned to the extreme Catholics. As the Catholics then seemed to be winning all along the line, they

demanded drastic action against heretics, and they persuaded her to sanction the most atrocious act of the whole Reformation period—the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre of August 24, 1572. The signal for this carefully planned orgy of bloodshed was given by ringing the church bells at two o'clock in the morning, and the butchery continued for several days, both in Paris and in the provinces. It is impossible to say how many Protestants were murdered, but the figure ten thousand is often given for Paris alone. At least an equal number perished elsewhere in France. Catherine thus made as many martyrs in a few days as Alva had succeeded in making in six years, or perhaps as many as all the pagans of the Roman Empire had made in three centuries. When the news reached Rome, Pope Gregory XIII gave thanks with a special *Te Deum* and commissioned a famous painter to immortalize the scene. Legend asserts that when Philip II heard the glad tidings he laughed aloud—for the first and last time in his life. But when the French ambassador next appeared for an audience with Queen Elizabeth, he was dismayed to find the whole court dressed in mourning.

Two years later Charles IX died and was succeeded by his brother Henry III (1574–1589). Though the Protestants had lost many leaders by the massacre, new ones arose, more bitter than their predecessors, and their cause was aided by the revulsion of decent persons throughout France. To offset this Protestant revival, the Catholics organized the Holy League (1576)—a body of fanatics who used the most demagogic methods to whip up enthusiasm for their cause and who presently enlisted the aid of Philip II. The civil wars resumed, with various interruptions, until the eighth of the series began in 1584. This war is known as the War of the Three Henrys—Henry III against both Henry of Guise (son of the murdered duke) and Henry of Bourbon, and the two latter against each other. As it was evident by this time that Henry III would leave no sons, the leaders of the Holy League decided that Henry of Bourbon must be replaced as heir to the French throne by his Catholic uncle, the cardinal of Bourbon. They also decided to dethrone Henry III immediately with the aid of Philip II. Henry III struck back at once, however, by procuring the assassination of the younger duke of Guise and his brother, the cardinal of Guise (December, 1588). Terrified by the subsequent fury of the Holy League, the king fled to the Bourbon camp at St. Cloud near Paris. Here he was tracked down and murdered by a crazed monk named Jacques Clément (July 31, 1589).

*The Holy
League*

Henry IV

The death of Henry III left the Protestant leader, Henry of Bourbon, as the lawful king of France. He was hailed with delight by the Protestants, of course, and was accepted by the great majority of the Politiques. But the Holy League rebelled and proclaimed the cardinal of Bourbon king as Charles X. Early in 1590 its forces were defeated at Ivry by Henry of Bourbon—now Henry IV (1589–1610). Henry then besieged Paris, but when the city was reduced to the direst circumstances, and kept from surrender only by the fanaticism of the League, Spanish troops from the Netherlands drove the king away. Paris was saved for a moment, but Henry soon renewed the siege. Impressed by the courageous resistance of the city, however, he presently decided to reduce opposition by other methods. He solemnly abjured Protestantism and entered the Catholic Church, remarking that Paris was well worth a Mass (1593). When he had thus cut the ground from under the League, all but a few extremists accepted him as king.

**Edict of
Nantes
(1598)**

Five years later Henry IV issued the Edict of Nantes, thereby easing religious controversy in France. This edict granted equal civil rights to Protestants and Catholics, it permitted Protestants to worship privately anywhere and publicly in about three thousand enumerated castles and two hundred enumerated towns—but not in Paris or at court—and it guaranteed the safety of Protestants by allowing them to hold and govern several fortified cities. In its essentials it remained in force for more than eighty years, but it was a compromise measure, based on necessity, rather than an expression of belief in religious freedom.

**Restoration
of France**

In his later years Henry IV became one of the most popular kings that France ever had. He went to work with great energy to repair the ravages wrought by thirty years of intermittent civil war, and he made great progress before his death in 1610—at the hands of an assassin who believed that the king's conversion had not been sincere. The coming of the Bourbon dynasty ushered in a new period, both in French and in European history. Wars were still to be fought over religion, but other forces had by now become the decisive ones in European politics. The Politiques controlled France and, before long, men holding similar opinions established their ascendancy in the other countries of Europe as well.

THE RELIGIOUS DIVISION OF EUROPE ABOUT 1570

-  Catholic
-  Lutheran
-  Calvinist
-  Anglican
-  Orthodox
-  Minor sects
-  Moslems

Jews especially in
Holland, Alsace,
and Poland



XVI

Richelieu (Painting by Champagne, Louvre)



THE END OF AN ERA

POLITICAL TURMOIL IN EUROPE—
THE INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION

42. POLITICAL TURMOIL

SPAIN had unquestionably been the leading European power in the days of Charles V and Philip II, surpassing all others in economic and in military strength. In the seventeenth century, however, she lost this primacy, with economic leadership passing to Holland and military leadership falling to France. Before the end of the century Spain had dropped to the rank of a second-rate power, and there she has remained ever since. Portugal regained her independence from Spain (1640), but the Dutch had by this time seized the best parts of her colonial empire in the East Indies, and she quickly became a negligible factor in European politics.

*Decline
of Spain*

Many forces contributed to Spain's spectacular decline. Some were political, others were economic, or social, or even religious. During the seventeenth century three incompetent kings ruled Spain, one after another: Philip III (1598-1621), Philip IV (1621-1665), and Charles II (1665-1700). The first lacked ability and was badly trained; the second was dissolute and uninterested in affairs of state; and the third was so diseased, both physically and mentally, that he could make no serious effort. Government therefore fell to favorites interested primarily in advancing their own fortunes. Such rulers would be a disaster for any country, but they were doubly unfortunate for an autocratic and mercantilistic state accustomed to the strong personal rule of Philip II. The Spanish government, as he had organized it, simply could not function efficiently without a strong king on the throne. Moreover, these three weaklings were so deeply impressed by the military prowess of their predecessors that they made frantic efforts to perpetuate this glory by winning new wars. The Spanish army was still a formidable instrument of war, and it won spectacular victories for Philip IV, but its cost of upkeep was so great that, whether it won or lost the wars, it brought ruin to Spain.

*Incom-
petent
kings*

**Unwise
economic
policies**

The economic history of Spain in the seventeenth century was even more tragic. In many ways the American gold proved a curse rather than a blessing. The Spanish government came to depend upon this unearned income, and when the influx of gold fell off rapidly in the early years of the seventeenth century, the government could no longer balance its budget. Rich nobles and churchmen managed to avoid paying taxes, and others had little with which to pay. Moreover, Spain had led in the price revolution of the preceding century, and while wages never kept up with prices, they were appreciably higher in Spain than elsewhere in Europe—in gold, that is, not in purchasing power. Spaniards therefore found it cheaper to import manufactured goods from abroad than to produce them at home, and Spanish industry lagged far behind that of other countries. When the government ordered the expulsion of the Moriscos (1609), who were the most skillful and industrious workers in Spain, it compounded bigotry with folly. Only about 100,000 persons were actually driven from their homes, but if the decree had been better enforced, the results would have been even more disastrous. The church, whose charities continuously supported huge numbers of persons in idleness, brought further economic misfortunes. In fact, it seemed that everybody in Spain, from the lowliest beggar to the lordliest grandee, had come to believe that work was beneath his dignity and that someone else owed him a living in the style to which he aspired. Spain began devouring her accumulated capital at a furious rate, and before the end of the century she was bankrupt. Her rudimentary industry withered away, her agriculture suffered from ignorance and neglect, her cities shrank, and her population declined by about 25 percent in a hundred years.

THE THIRTY YEARS' WAR

**Economic
decline in
Germany**

While the Spanish Hapsburgs were thus feebly presiding over their country's decline, their Austrian cousins were suffering catastrophes almost as great. In fact, central Europe's decline began more than half a century before that of Spain, and in large measure it was caused by Spain's brief day of glory. The commercial revolution and the new trade routes robbed the German cities of their prosperity, and central Europe reverted to an agrarian economy, with feudal princes defying the emperor and preventing the formation of a strong national state. The Wars of Religion and attacks by the Turks added further to the confusion, and the second half of the sixteenth century became a tragic period in German history.

Toward the end of the century, however, conditions improved somewhat. The Turkish peril declined, partly because the Turks were occupied with wars against Persia, partly because of incompetent sultans. At the same time economic readjustment in Germany ended the worst phases of the depression. Men then found the energy to quarrel over religion once more, and leaders of every faction or sect began to attribute the sad state of the land to their religious rivals. The Calvinists and the Catholics were especially aggressive. The

**Religious
controversy
revived**



former had not been numerous in Germany at the time of the Treaty of Augsburg (1555) and had therefore not been granted the same liberties as Lutherans. They had since made great progress, however, especially in the Palatinate and the Rhineland, and they now demanded equality. The Catholics, on the other hand, being inspired by the successes of the Counter-Reformation, hoped to gain all central Europe, or at least Hungary and Bohemia. To ward off this danger Frederick IV, elector of the Palatinate, a Calvinist and son-in-law of James I of England, organized the Protestant Union (1608). A year later the Catholics, led by Maximilian of Bavaria, replied with the Catholic League, and before ten years had passed, all Germany was engulfed in the religious and political disturbances that are now known as the Thirty Years' War.

**Bohemia
under the
Hapsburgs**

This war, being in reality a series of wars, is ordinarily divided into four parts, the first of which is the Bohemian period (1618-1625). Since 1547 the kingship of Bohemia had been hereditary in the Hapsburg family, whose leaders were constantly augmenting their power at the expense of the local nobility. The country was about 90 percent Protestant in 1600, but it was divided between Lutherans, Calvinists, and "Utraquists" or followers of John Huss, and as late as 1609 an imperial edict had granted them a high degree of religious liberty. Three years later, however, a new emperor (Matthias, 1612-1619) mounted the throne. Not only did he restrict this new liberty but, being childless, he named as his successor his cousin Ferdinand, who was an ardent Catholic trained by the Jesuits and sympathetic with the Catholic League. The Bohemian nobility then made ready to resist this unwelcome ruler.

**War in
Bohemia**

When Matthias closed a Utraquist church, a group of Bohemian nobles protested and, after various altercations, pitched two imperial agents from a window (1618). This "Defenestration of Prague" (*fenestra* is the Latin word for "window") precipitated armed hostilities. When Matthias died a year later, the Bohemians declared Ferdinand deposed, and accepted Frederick V of the Palatinate, head of the Protestant Union, as their king. His reign was short, for in 1620 he was defeated by the imperial armies in Bohemia, and his lands in the Palatinate were overrun by Spanish soldiers from the neighboring Netherlands. Frederick fled to Holland, and his Bohemian followers were granted an option between massacre, exile, and conversion. Bohemia was quickly remade into a Catholic country, though her conversion entailed a reduction of her population from

almost six million to barely one million, and the survivors usually were not very enthusiastic Catholics. In fact, it might be said that Bohemia's misfortunes in the seventeenth century were merely a dress rehearsal for those that befell her in the twentieth, when political or economic catchwords were substituted for the religious shibboleths that were popular in the Reformation period. At the same time, half the Palatinate was awarded to Maximilian of Bavaria, leader of the Catholic League, and a large part of its Calvinist population was converted to Catholicism by somewhat milder methods.

Hungarians and a few Protestant princes in Germany had joined the Bohemians, but Frederick had not received the support he expected. His defeat frightened many Protestants, however, and in 1625 hostilities were resumed under the leadership of King Christian IV of Denmark, who was a Lutheran and, as duke of Holstein, a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The Emperor Ferdinand had by this time discovered an able general in Albrecht von Wallenstein (1583-1634). Though a Bohemian born to a Utraquist family, Wallenstein had been educated a Catholic and had later been allowed to buy huge confiscated estates in his native land at nominal prices. He now organized a mercenary army which lived largely off the land, and which was the most terrible, as well as the most efficient, that Europe had yet seen. He easily defeated Christian and occupied considerable areas in north Germany. The Danish period of the war came to an end in 1629, but Wallenstein continued to ravage Protestants and Catholics alike, partly to support his army, partly because his soaring ambition caused him to dream of a crown. In 1630, therefore, the emperor dismissed Wallenstein and most of his army.

Almost at once war was renewed by the intervention of Gustavus Adolphus (1594-1632), who for several years had been building an empire for his native Sweden (see page 769). Early in 1631 the imperial armies captured and destroyed the rich and important city of Magdeburg. The accompanying massacre of about twenty thousand persons caused most Protestant states to enter the war, even though they distrusted Gustavus's ambitions. Within a year the Swedes had driven the imperial forces from northern Germany, occupied parts of southern Germany (including Augsburg and Munich), and forced Ferdinand to recall Wallenstein. After a year of maneuvering, the two great generals met at Lützen, in Saxony, near the end of 1632. The Swedes won the battle, but Gustavus Adolphus was

**Danish
period
(1625-
1629)**

**Swedish
period
(1630-
1635)**

killed. The war continued, with the northern armies led by Gustavus's chancellor, Axel Oxenstierna (1583-1654). Wallenstein then resumed his plots and was again dismissed early in 1634. A few weeks later he was assassinated. The emperor probably had not planned the murder, but he richly rewarded the assassins.

**French
period
(1635-
1648)**

The fourth, or French, period of the war began in 1635 and lasted until 1648. The French minister, Cardinal Richelieu (see page 773), was anxious to prevent the creation of a strong Hapsburg monarchy in Germany, such as seemed likely after the death of Gustavus Adolphus. He therefore encouraged Oxenstierna with both money and troops. At the same time the Spanish Hapsburgs, aiding their Austrian cousins, invaded France from Belgium. The great Hapsburg empire of Charles V seemed to be rising from the dead. The war thus lost most of its religious character and became part of a general European struggle for political power, but it lost none of its ferocity thereby. In fact, some of the most terrible events in this war, so full of atrocities, occurred during its closing years. At last, however, a series of treaties drawn up in Westphalia ended the war (1648).

**Treaties of
Westphalia**

By these treaties Sweden was allowed to annex a large part of Pomerania, in northeastern Germany, as well as Bremen at the mouth of the Elbe; France got most of Alsace; and a few north German states, notably Brandenburg, increased their territories. The dream of a united Germany was thus definitely destroyed. The territory known as Germany was divided into more than three hundred states, all virtually independent, though some of them were little more than large farms. Calvinism was accorded the same liberty as Lutheranism—that is to say, princes could choose Calvinism if they wished, but subjects were allowed no freedom of choice. In various German states that had become Catholic during the war (but not in Bohemia or Austria), Protestant communities were allowed to continue their form of worship. Though the Dutch had not participated in the German war directly, they had been at war with Spain and had subsidized the Swedes. Their complete independence was formally recognized by treaty in 1648, as was that of Switzerland, which had remained neutral.

**The ruin
of Germany**

The Thirty Years' War was one of the greatest disasters that ever befell Germany. Her economic life had been declining for many years, but her losses in war surpassed those in trade. For many years armies marched back and forth over the land, plundering and destroying as they went. Germany was reduced to the status of a poor agricultural

country. It has been estimated that her population was reduced by at least one-third between 1618 and 1648, and a hundred years were to pass before her people were again able to play an important part in European politics or to make contributions to European civilization.

And finally, it may be pointed out that the Treaties of Westphalia mark a decisive turning point in the history of the papacy. The pope sent a nuncio (or ambassador) to the peace conference, but the poor man was received coldly, he was not informed as to what was going on, and he was not asked or even allowed to sign the treaties. Both Catholics and Protestants ignored the pope and his agents, to whom they conceded no rights whatsoever in secular matters. The medieval dream of a universal papal state thus petered out in the events of 1648.

*Waning
importance
of religion*

Sweden as a World Power

When Gustavus Adolphus invaded Germany in 1630, Sweden for the first time took an active part in the high politics of western Europe. In the late Middle Ages Denmark, Norway, and Sweden had been in active rivalry with the Hanseatic League and, after several wars, they were united under Margaret of Denmark in 1388. The resulting "Union of Kalmar" was a personal union only, with each kingdom retaining its own institutions and liberties, yet it endured for upward of a century. The winds of nationalism reached even Sweden, however; a nobleman named Gustavus Vasa led a successful national revolt; and in 1523 he became king of Sweden. After his death in 1560 his three sons ruled in turn, and the last of the three was succeeded by the old king's grandson, Gustavus Adolphus (1611-1632).

*The Vasa
family*

From the early days of the kingdom religion and foreign policy had been closely entwined in Sweden. Gustavus I had been aided in his rebellion by Protestant Germans from Lübeck, and in his early years as king he embraced Protestantism, secularized church lands, and established the Lutheran Church. When he threw off this German protection, he found himself threatened by two powerful Slavic states to the east, Russia and Poland. As Finland was then a part of Sweden—it had been conquered and converted by militant Swedish missionaries in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—and as this province bordered on Russia, Gustavus preferred to ally himself with the Poles. The king's second son, John, was therefore married to a Polish

*Protestant-
ism in
Swedish
politics*

princess, an ardent Catholic who brought up her son in that faith. The Counter-Reformation being at high tide, the Poles made vigorous though unsuccessful efforts to convert the Swedish king. Upon John's death in 1592, however, the throne descended to his Catholic son Sigismund (also king of Poland, 1587-1632), who was anxious to force his Swedish subjects into his church. During the ensuing civil war Sigismund was driven out by his uncle, Charles IX (1599-1611), who dispossessed and exiled all Catholics from Sweden.

**Gustavus
Adolphus**

Gustavus Adolphus came to the throne in 1611, being then not quite seventeen years old but having an excellent humanistic education and having already been entrusted by his father with important political tasks. He therefore continued the family policies. Sigismund, during his brief reign, had conquered Estonia for Sweden (1595),



GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS. (Culver)

and Charles had eagerly continued the war, profiting by Russia's severe "time of troubles." Six years after coming to the throne, Gustavus Adolphus signed a peace treaty which shut Russia from the Gulf of Finland and the Baltic Sea (1617). The whole decade of the 1620's was then spent in a moderately successful war against Poland, whose ruler (Sigismund) still claimed to be the lawful king of Sweden. During these campaigns Gustavus Adolphus learned the art of war and showed himself to be a military genius. He also became a professional champion of Protestantism. A deeply religious man himself, he was able to inspire his troops with the same enthusiasm, and they ordinarily marched into battle singing Lutheran hymns.

When it seemed that the armies of the Holy Roman Emperor were about to conquer northern Germany and the southern shores of the Baltic Sea, Gustavus Adolphus could not remain neutral. He shared the family ambition to make the Baltic into a Swedish lake, and perhaps he was already dreaming of a huge Protestant empire, centering in Sweden but including most of Germany as well. He could always lead Catholic Germans to Protestantism by the methods which the emperor was then using to make Catholics in Bohemia and the Palatinate. His untimely death at Lützen in 1632 ended such dreams, but Oxenstierna did not make peace until 1648. He then got very little for Sweden's victories, not even the whole shore of the Baltic.

No account of Sweden's brief day as a world power is complete without passing mention of Gustavus Adolphus's brilliant daughter, the famous Queen Christina. Born in 1626 and inheriting the throne at the age of five, she began her active rule in 1644. She early showed her intellectual superiority and her great force of character, and she began quarreling with Oxenstierna almost as soon as she became queen. Seeing the uselessness of the war, she wished to make peace at once, to devote the next few years to creating a new aristocracy, loyal to herself, and to building up the country for another try at greatness. Her dreams of grandeur exceeded even those of her father, and she pursued them with the same high intelligence. But her task was an impossible one. Sweden simply did not possess the necessary resources, either material or human. As Christina gradually learned this bitter truth, she began quarreling with everybody. She gave herself over for a time to revelry and dissipation, she openly expressed contempt for her small and backward country, and in 1654 she left Sweden after formally abdicating. Soon thereafter she entered the Catholic Church and went to Rome, where she passed the remainder

*His dreams
of empire*

*Queen
Christina*

of her life. Here she set herself up as a patron of the arts and sciences, lived in a splendid palazzo (now the property of the Italian Academy of Sciences, used to house its library and a national art gallery), gave political advice to several successive popes, and sometimes embarrassed them greatly by her flighty escapades. After her death in 1689 her coffin was placed among those of the popes in the crypt of St. Peter's, and her statue is still displayed in the church itself. No other woman in history has been honored with this crypt as her final resting place.

FRANCE UNDER RICHELIEU AND MAZARIN

*Marie de
Médicis*

After the Edict of Nantes had calmed the religious quarrels of France for a time, and the powerful nobility had been momentarily quieted, Henry IV turned his attention to restoring the nation's economic strength and prosperity. He made great progress in healing the wounds caused by the Wars of Religion, but when he was assassinated (1610), it seemed likely that renewed warfare would destroy all that had been accomplished. As Henry's son and heir, Louis XIII (1610-1643), was not yet nine years old, a regent became necessary, and the position fell to his mother, Marie de Médicis (1573-1642). Descended from the famous Florentine banking family, Marie was an inordinately ambitious but not an able ruler, and she soon fell under the influence of favorites, chief of whom were an Italian adventurer (Concini) and his wife.

*The last
estates-
general*

Marie's lavish expenditures quickly dissipated the financial reserves that Henry had laboriously built up, and in 1614 she was forced to summon the estates-general and beg for money. Had the leaders of the estates been able and willing to work together, France might then have achieved a parliamentary government, but they merely quarreled with each other, and after three weeks Marie sent them home. Not until the fateful year 1789 did the estates-general meet again. In 1617 the young king performed the one royal deed of his life by asserting himself enough to have Concini assassinated and his wife executed for sorcery. But Marie continued to solve her most difficult problems simply by buying off the nobility with pensions and honors. France might have quickly drifted into anarchy once more had not Richelieu taken over the government.

*Armand de
Richelieu*

Armand de Richelieu (1585-1642) was a member of the French nobility. He became bishop at the age of twenty-one, and in 1614 he was a member of the estates-general. As orator of the First Estate

(the clergy) he attracted the favorable attention of Marie de Médicis, who took him into her service and presently had him named cardinal. By 1624 Richelieu was in complete control of the French government, and until his death in 1642 he not only governed France but also played a leading role in European diplomacy.

Less than six months after Richelieu's death, Louis XIII followed him to the grave and was succeeded by his four-year-old son, Louis XIV (1643-1715). Again a regency became necessary, and again the post fell to the queen-mother, Anne of Austria (1601-1666), a daughter of Philip III of Spain. In this case too the actual government of France fell to a churchman, Cardinal Mazarin (1602-1661). Born in southern Italy, Giulio Mazarini had studied at Rome and in Spain, after which he entered the diplomatic service of the pope. Attracting the attention of Richelieu, he became a naturalized Frenchman with a French name—though he never spoke French well—and attached himself to the great cardinal. Upon Richelieu's death he became prime minister and, continuing the master's policies, governed France until his death in 1661. It thus came about that for almost forty years France was ruled by two cardinals. It was a crucial and exciting period in French history, best known to many readers perhaps from Alexandre Dumas's famous novels, *The Three Musketeers* and its sequel, *Twenty Years After*.

Richelieu and Mazarin revived and continued the political policies favored by Henry IV and the Politiques during the last years of the Wars of Religion. Though both were cardinals in the Roman Church, neither was a religious bigot, and each regarded religion chiefly from the political point of view. They were interested primarily in strengthening the central authority in France and in giving France a secure position in Europe. The first of these tasks required them to reduce the political power of the Protestants and the nobility while the second made necessary the defeat of the Hapsburgs in Austria and Spain.

The Edict of Nantes had left the French Protestants in control of a large number of fortified cities, the most important of which was La Rochelle. Richelieu disapproved of this situation, which might enable a religious sect to defy the royal government, and which thus virtually gave it the status of a state within the state. He therefore took advantage of various disturbances during the 1620's to deprive the Protestants of these special privileges. The Protestants fought back, and Richelieu was compelled to besiege La Rochelle for fourteen

**Jules
Mazarin**

**Their goal:
a strong
France**

**Richelieu
and the
Protestants**

months before it surrendered (1628). Thereafter Protestants had no power to defy the king, but they lost no other liberties.

**Richelieu
and the
nobility**

Richelieu next undertook to reduce the powers of the French nobility by quietly replacing them in the government with officials, drawn from the middle classes, who were loyal to himself and to the crown. Thus the task of governing the provinces was gradually taken from the aristocratic governors and given to new officials called "intendants." Richelieu continued to appoint nobles as governors, and to pay them handsomely, but they had little to do, and usually they were quite pleased to have the intendants do their work for them. But sometimes nobles conspired against Richelieu. He therefore employed spies to ferret out their conspiracies, and until the last year of his life none reached serious proportions.

**The
Fronde**

Under Mazarin the nobility grew more restless, partly because their oppressor was not even a real Frenchman. The Thirty Years' War was then entering its final phases, with active French intervention in Germany and with Spanish troops invading France from the Netherlands. The devastations of war, along with high taxes, brought suffering to every class of society but especially to the peasants. At just this time, too, there were serious revolts in other parts of Europe, in Catalonia, in Naples, and above all in England, with much loose talk about liberty. Excited Frenchmen took to rioting in Paris during the summer of 1648, and disturbances occurred again in both Paris and the provinces on several occasions during the next five years. Agitators directed their cries against Mazarin in particular, but a few leaders talked of parliamentary government somewhat along English lines, saying that taxes should be levied by a parliament and urging the right of habeas corpus. For a moment the situation was so precarious that young Louis XIV took refuge at nearby St.-Germain while Mazarin fled almost to the German border. The rioters were soon repressed, however, and Mazarin spent his last years in relative peace. In retrospect the French called these disturbances the "Fronde"—apparently taking the name from a game played by children in the streets of Paris. In fact, the results of the Fronde were not much greater than those of a child's game of marbles. It was merely the last futile effort of the old nobility of France to assert their liberties against the crown.

**Richelieu's
foreign
policy**

The foreign policy of Richelieu and Mazarin followed the general pattern established by Henry IV, who was inspired by the spirit of the Politiques. Disregarding religious differences and alignments, he

had sought to give France a strong position in Europe by reducing the power of the Hapsburgs, who then menaced France from three directions—from the Pyrenees, from the Spanish Netherlands, and from Franche-Comté. Marie de Médicis reversed this policy, becoming pro-Spanish and marrying her son, Louis XIII, to Anne of Austria, daughter of the Spanish king. Richelieu, on the other hand, resumed Henry's anti-Hapsburg policy, gave financial support to the German Protestants and Gustavus Adolphus, and later sent troops to devastate the Rhineland. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) ended the fighting in Germany, with most of Alsace and parts of Lorraine going to France, but the war with Spain continued until the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659. France also acquired Roussillon on the Spanish frontier, as well as Artois and other districts at the expense of the Spanish Netherlands. Mazarin also arranged for the marriage of Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip IV, to the young Louis XIV. This time the marriage was a symbol of French victory. France was then ready for the glamorous reign of Louis XIV, which was the culmination of one period in history and the beginning of another. It will be described in a later chapter.

Frenchmen had taken little part in the great explorations of the sixteenth century. Breton fishermen probably operated in waters not far from Newfoundland, and Francis I sent Jacques Cartier on three expeditions (1535–1541) to explore the St. Lawrence. Cartier reached the site of Montreal, but he failed in his half-hearted attempts to found a colony there, and for many years the French did nothing more to establish themselves in Canada. Efforts at colonization in Florida in the 1560's proved equally unsuccessful. Henry IV revived interest in Canada, however, and sent out several explorers, chief of whom was Samuel de Champlain (1567–1635), who explored Acadia (now Nova Scotia), founded Quebec (1608), and discovered the lake that still bears his name. Explorations were continued under Richelieu, who organized a company, known as "The Hundred Associates," to develop New France—as Canada was then called (1627). Missionaries and fur traders came to Canada, but only a few French farmers settled there. Montreal was founded in 1642, but in 1660 the total white population of Canada numbered less than three thousand. Nevertheless, French explorers had by this time mapped the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes to the western tip of Lake Superior, and other Frenchmen had seized and colonized several islands in the West Indies, notably Martinique and Guadeloupe.

**France
in Canada**

STUART ENGLAND

**The Stuart
dynasty
(1603–
1714)**

With the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, the reign of the Tudor dynasty in England reached its end. In accordance with her last wish, Elizabeth's distant kinsman, James VI of Scotland, was immediately proclaimed King as James I of England (1603–1625). The son of Mary Queen of Scots and her second husband, Henry Stuart (Lord Darnley), James founded the Stuart dynasty, whose six members were kings or queens of England and Scotland until 1714. As soon as he came to the throne of England, James proposed a union of the two kingdoms, and when the English parliament refused its consent, he ruled the two states separately but simultaneously. Only under Queen Anne, the last of the Stuarts, was this personal union superseded by a formal union of England and Scotland as the "Kingdom of Great Britain" (1707).

James I

When his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, was forced to abdicate in 1567 (see page 754) James inherited the throne of Scotland at the age of thirteen months, and the kingdom was governed by regents while he was being educated by Presbyterian tutors. In 1583 James began to rule in his own name, and he therefore had twenty years of political experience before mounting the English throne. During these years he reduced the factious Scottish nobility to obedience, established a centralized monarchy of the type then favored in other countries, and developed extreme views regarding royal power. Not content with regal honors, James also sought literary laurels by publishing many dull and pedantic writings. Often these works dealt with political theory, but in his *Counterblaste to Tobacco* (1604) the king vigorously denounced the practice of smoking, then recently introduced from America.

**His
political
theories**

Though physically weak and ill-favored, James was of strong mind and well educated, but obstinate and bigoted, tricky and unreliable. Perhaps Henry IV of France was not far wrong in pronouncing him "the wisest fool in Christendom." His early education, coupled with an idealized view of his mother's troubles, had given James a strong distaste for Presbyterianism. On an important occasion he declared that a presbytery agrees with monarchy no more than the devil agrees with God, to which he appended the further remark, "no bishop, no king." His insistence upon royal absolutism in both church and state made James a leading proponent of the doctrine of the divine right

of kings, which taught that all power descends from God, through the king, to his bishops and other agents, who in turn rule the people. When Scottish Presbyterians and English Puritans criticized these views, James threatened to "harrie them out of the land, or else do worse."

As soon as James became king of England he learned that he had inherited countless problems which Elizabeth had been unable to solve, but which had not become acute in her day because of her personal popularity. James had no such popularity to smooth his way, and his problems were more difficult. First of all, there was the matter of taxation and government finance. Rising prices and expanding royal government voraciously devoured the revenues of the state, and James's political theories caused him to desire a secure income, independent of parliament. Parliamentary leaders, on the other hand, were prepared to use the "power of the purse" (the right to levy taxes) as a means of keeping the king in line. At the same time lawyers such as Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634) were attacking James's theory of royal absolutism, arguing that even the king was subject to the law of the land, and appealing to such revered and ancient documents as Magna Carta to prove their point.

*Financial
troubles*

Secondly, James faced grave difficulties regarding religion. Early in his reign he banished the Jesuits and seminary priests, some of whom were still active in England. In retaliation, a certain Guy Fawkes attempted to blow up both king and parliament with kegs of gunpowder concealed in the parliament building: his plot was discovered in the nick of time, and for centuries thereafter "Guy Fawkes Day" (November 5) was celebrated in England with bonfires and displays of fireworks. More important were the Puritans, who wished to "purify" the Anglican Church by making ritual simpler, curtailing the power of the bishops, and introducing Zwinglian or Calvinistic theology. At a conference held early in 1604 the Puritans expressed their views, but their only gain was the appointment of the committee that eventually published the Authorized, or King James, Version of the Bible (1611). Discontent continued among the Puritans, and in the next reign it broke into open rebellion.

*Religious
troubles*

Foreign affairs were equally troublesome. As James was sincerely enamored of peace—for financial reasons, if no others—he quickly concluded the war with Spain that had been dragging on ever since the Armada. He further appeased Spain by repeated and long-continued negotiations (which came to nothing) for the marriage of his

*Anti-
Hapsburg
policies*

son and heir, Charles, to a daughter of Philip III, and by the execution of the famous courtier and adventurer, Sir Walter Raleigh, for his piratical attacks upon Spanish towns in the New World (1618). The Thirty Years' War caused James to reverse this pro-Spanish policy. His wife was the sister of Christian IV of Denmark, and his daughter the wife of Frederick V of the Palatinate, which associated James closely with the Protestant cause in Germany. At times he granted his relatives large financial subsidies which he could ill afford, but there was no armed intervention until the last year of his reign. James then sent a few troops to the Palatinate, thus resuming the war with Spain, but the English only suffered defeats (1624). In that same year Richelieu won one of his early diplomatic triumphs by negotiating a treaty with England under which Henrietta Maria, sister of Louis XIII, was to marry Charles, heir to the English throne, thereby attaching England more firmly to the anti-Hapsburg faction in European politics.

**Expansion
of English
trade**

In spite of James's difficulties with political and religious leaders, his reign was a period of high economic prosperity in England. The end of the long war with Spain brought a revival of trade that lasted until the Thirty Years' War again disturbed the economic life of all Europe. The English East India Company, founded in 1600, began to pay fabulous dividends, and other companies engaged in foreign trade prospered correspondingly. It was at this time, too, that the first English colonies were planted in America. Though Sir Walter Raleigh had attempted to colonize Virginia in the days of Elizabeth, the English met with no success until the founding of Jamestown (1607) and Plymouth (1620). Other colonies followed soon, but English colonization was not important until the second half of the century.

Charles I

James was succeeded by his son, Charles I (1625-1649), who was twenty-four years old when he ascended the throne. The English had always regarded James as a Scot and a foreigner, but they accepted his son as a true Englishman. The French marriage was unpopular, however, and Charles was forced to prove his loyalty to the Protestant cause by sending ships and troops in a vain effort to save La Rochelle from Richelieu. England thus found herself entangled in costly and inglorious wars with both Spain and France, and not until 1630 could Charles restore peace. Meantime Charles's first three parliaments (1625, 1626, 1628-1629) had shown every intention of continuing their old quarrel with the crown. The king then tried to govern without parliament, as Richelieu and others were doing on the Continent,



CHARLES I, Painting by Van Dyck. (Louvre)

and for eleven years no new parliament was summoned. During these years Charles raised money by expedients which were highly unpopular though technically legal. The government managed to scrape along in time of peace, but in 1640 a rebellion in Scotland forced the king to summon parliament and sue for funds.

In spite of his Catholic wife, Charles remained an Anglican in religion, though favoring the "High Church" faction, which approached closest to Roman Catholicism in theology and ritual. His chief adviser in religious matters was William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury (1633-1645), who shared the king's High-Church proclivities and did what he could to suppress Puritanism and Presbyterianism in England and Scotland respectively. Unfortunately for

***His High
Anglican
religion***

him, however, Laud was so tactless, and at times so brutal, that he quickly alienated many of the king's loyal friends. In 1637 Charles ordered the Scottish Church to use a prayer book and form of worship similar to those used in England, and thus provoked rebellion. A year later the Scottish "Covenanters" drew up the "National Covenant" by which they leagued together to defend their religion. A little later these Covenanters gave the Scottish "Kirk"—the Established Church of Scotland—a definitely Presbyterian form of worship and government. Charles attempted to cancel these reforms, thereby precipitating a rebellion. He marched against the rebels, but he lacked the financial means to provide adequate troops, and after briefly invading Scotland he was forced to retreat and make peace on their terms (1639).

**Charles
forced to
summon
parliament**

Charles saw no way to escape from his sorry plight except by begging aid of parliament. Writs were sent out ordering elections, and the so-called "Short Parliament" met for three weeks in April, 1640. When its members refused all aid until after the reform of abuses, Charles sent them home. Collecting what troops he could, he invaded Scotland once more, and for a second time he was expelled in most unkingly fashion. The Scots then occupied large areas in northern England and were preparing to march on London when the king bought them off with renewed concessions and the promise of a large indemnity. As they refused to accept any treaty not ratified by parliament, and insisted upon immediate payment of the indemnity, Charles was forced to summon a new parliament. The "Long Parliament" met in November, 1640, and not until twenty years later was it dissolved.

Civil War

**The Long
Parliament
(1640–
1660)**

When the Long Parliament assembled late in 1640, its members were almost unanimous in demanding the end of personal and arbitrary rule such as Charles had conducted during the past eleven years. One of its first acts was to order the arrest of Charles's chief adviser, Lord Strafford, who was accused of treason. When this charge could not be substantiated, he was condemned under a bill of attainder—that is, a special act of parliament ordered his execution. Charles cravenly consented, and Strafford was beheaded (1641). Archbishop Laud was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London, but his execution did not follow until 1645. Parliament also passed several laws designed to check royal absolutism. It was decreed that there-

after parliament should meet at least once every three years, and that it might not be dissolved without its own consent. Various courts through which Charles had exercised his tyranny were abolished, and the king was forbidden to collect new taxes without the express consent of parliament. Having little option in the matter, Charles reluctantly signed these laws.

Matters concerning religion caused greater difficulty, for here parliament was a babel of contradictory voices. Some members were Anglicans and some were Puritans, and the latter were not all of one mind. The Anglicans supported episcopacy, or "prelacy" (church government by bishops), some Puritans would have been willing to tolerate bishops with greatly reduced powers, others favored Presbyterianism (one national church under officials chosen by the local churches), and a few, known as Independents or Congregationalists, insisted that each local church should be independent of all others under its own elected officials. Not all Anglicans followed Laud in his ritualism and Catholic theology, but the Puritans detested his innovations. These various factions soon began quarreling among themselves. After the death of Strafford had expiated Charles's tyranny, and the recurrence of such tyranny had seemingly been rendered impossible by parliamentary legislation, the Anglicans began rallying around the king to form a royalist party, and in the summer of 1642 this faction appealed to the sword.

The two parties in the ensuing civil war championed the king and parliament respectively. Members of the former group were called "Cavaliers" (in the sense of "swashbucklers") by their opponents, and they retaliated by calling the parliamentary party "Roundheads," because of their closely cropped hair. The Cavaliers, made up largely of the landed aristocracy and country gentlemen, were especially strong in the northern and western parts of England, while the strength of the Roundheads lay in the cities, especially London, and in the eastern and southern counties, but nowhere were there clear lines of demarcation. There were Puritan lords who fought against Royalist businessmen, there were Anglicans who supported parliament and Presbyterians who supported the king, while city fought against city, village against village, brother against brother, and father against son. The royalist faction contained many wealthy men, but as their wealth consisted principally of land, it was of little help to Charles at the moment. Many had received military training, however, and their outdoor life, with plenty of riding and hunting, made

**Religion
and politics**

**Cavaliers
and
Round-
heads**

them good soldiers. The parliamentary leaders, on the other hand, had plenty of ready money and could raise more by taxation, but their sedentary manner of life did not produce vigorous fighters. It is not surprising, therefore, that the king's forces won the first skirmishes but that in the end parliament was victorious.

**Oliver
Cromwell**

The military genius who won the war was Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658). Belonging to the family of Henry VIII's minister of the same name, Cromwell was born a country gentleman but educated by strict Puritans, both at school and later at Cambridge. He was elected to Charles's third parliament (1628–1629), where he joined the faction most critical of royal policy, and he sat in both the Short and the Long parliaments. Having had no military experience or training before the Civil War broke out, he was, like Julius Caesar, one of the few great



CROMWELL. (Culver)

generals in history who commanded troops for the first time when over forty years of age. He quickly saw, however, that the early parliamentary armies, composed largely of mercenary riffraff, were no match for the Cavaliers. He therefore organized a new regiment of cavalry, later known as the "Ironsides," made up of serious and God-fearing Puritans, who willingly subjected themselves to stringent discipline and were filled with religious enthusiasm. The Ironsides were so successful that the whole parliamentary army was presently reorganized along similar lines. In this "New Model" army men were paid good wages, and rapid promotion was open to anyone who showed military ability. The Sabbath was rigorously observed, psalms were sung, swearing was punished, and everyone attended prayer meetings at which "a corporal versed in Scripture might lead the devotions of his less gifted colonel and admonish a backsliding major."

While Cromwell was building up his military force, other parliamentary leaders were busy with political problems. In the summer of 1643 a delegation was sent to Scotland to negotiate the alliance commonly called the Solemn League and Covenant. The Scots at first demanded that all England accept their form of Presbyterianism, but, when a financial subsidy was promised, they consented to a compromise by which the churches of England, Scotland, and Ireland should be organized "according to the word of God and the examples of the best reformed churches"—a formula which could mean anything or nothing. A Scottish force then invaded England early in 1644. Charles retaliated by enlisting Irish Catholics, thereby alienating many English partisans, but Cromwell defeated his forces decisively at Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645). When Charles presently surrendered to the Scots, the war came to a momentary pause (1646).

Cromwell's victories precipitated a grave crisis in England. The Scots again demanded that Presbyterianism be the sole religion tolerated in England, and the Presbyterian members of parliament seemed prepared to grant their demand. The Anglicans were no longer in a position to protest, but the army could and did protest vigorously. Cromwell and the great majority of his soldiers were Independents, but as they formed only a small fraction of the English people, they proposed the toleration of all religions—though some of them drew the line at "popery and prelacy" on the one hand and Unitarianism on the other.

*Parliamentary
victories*

*Presbyterians and
Independents*

*Independ-
ents in
control*

When Charles surrendered to the Scots, he still hoped that he might regain his throne by playing off Scots against Englishmen and Independents against Presbyterians. Early in 1647, however, parliament paid the arrears on the subsidy promised four years earlier and the Scots withdrew from England, leaving Charles in the hands of English Presbyterians. The king therefore promised to establish Presbyterianism as the sole religion of England and Scotland, with no toleration of Catholics, Anglicans, or Independents; parliament attempted to dissolve the New Model army without paying the soldiers; and the Scots again invaded England, this time to support the king. Thus began the "Second Civil War" of 1648. Presbyterians and royalists fought against Cromwell's army, and again the army emerged victorious, with the king becoming its prisoner. A few weeks later one of Cromwell's officers, Colonel Pride, expelled all Presbyterians from parliament. The Long Parliament had originally contained about five hundred members; more than two hundred royalists had withdrawn in 1642, and other members had since died; and after Pride excluded about 150 members, only ninety remained. Those remaining after "Pride's Purge" were known as the "Rump," or sitting part of parliament.

*Charles
executed*

It then became necessary for Cromwell and his associates to decide what to do with their king. Until this time nearly all Englishmen, even those supporting the parliamentary cause, had been monarchists with little objection to Charles personally as king. They commonly attributed what they considered his misdeeds to such advisers as Strafford and Laud. But Charles's recent duplicity and intrigues had alienated many friends, and republicans in the army were becoming more vociferous day by day. In the last days of 1648 the Rump formally charged the king with treason and, after a trial lasting three weeks, he was found guilty and condemned to death. He was beheaded on January 30, 1649.

Commonwealth and Protectorate

*Cromwell
as Lord
Protector*

England was then declared a "Commonwealth" (or Republic, May, 1649), but during the next ten years it was governed by Cromwell and the army. Within four years, Cromwell had expelled the Rump and briefly experimented with a new parliament (called "Barebone's Parliament" from one of its members, Praise-God Barebone) chosen by army officers from a list of candidates nominated by Independent clergymen. Cromwell and his officers then drew up a constitution,

called the Instrument of Government, under which Cromwell became Lord Protector of England and virtually its dictator (1653). This "Protectorate" endured until after Cromwell's death in 1658.

During these years Cromwell was at war most of the time. He first turned his attention to Ireland. Here the Catholics in the south had for once united with the Presbyterians in the north to proclaim Charles's son king as Charles II. In the summer of 1649, Cromwell descended upon the island in fury and pacified it with great brutality. Thousands of Irishmen were executed and other thousands were transported to the West Indies, where their condition was little better than that of slaves. The penal laws against Catholics were rigorously enforced, and Cromwell's friends were given large tracts of confiscated land. Cromwell's conduct in Ireland undoubtedly forms the darkest page in the long and sorry history of Anglo-Irish relations, and memory of it has done much to render a solution of the Irish problem impossibly difficult.

*Pacification
of Ireland*

Meanwhile Cromwell had crossed to Scotland late in 1650, where he twice defeated Scottish armies much larger than his own. Fortunately he was more merciful to the Scots than he had been to the Irish. Few persons were punished vindictively, free trade between the two countries was established, and the most unpopular of his innovations was the establishment of religious toleration for all Protestants.

*And
Scotland*

Cromwell and his friends were much interested in foreign trade, which had developed rapidly in the early days of Charles I but had declined during the Civil War. The Navigation Act of 1651 prohibited the importation into England of any goods from the New World in other than English ships, manned with English crews, or of goods from Europe in any but English ships or ships of the country in which the goods originated. This act was aimed especially at the Dutch, whose large merchant fleet derived great profits from the carrying trade, and in 1652 war with Holland broke out. The English commander, Admiral Blake, presently won important victories, after which he drove all Dutch shipping from the English Channel. Peace was signed in 1654, but within two years England was engaged in a commercial war with Spain. Again Blake was victorious. Cromwell had hoped to conquer Santo Domingo, but when peace was signed in 1659, after Cromwell's death, England had to content herself with Jamaica.

*Wars with
Holland
and Spain*

England prospered economically during the ten years of the Commonwealth and Protectorate, but she could not find religious peace. Faction continued to struggle against faction, sect against sect. In the

*The West-
minster
Confession*

days of Presbyterian supremacy, parliament had summoned the "Westminster Assembly" of about 150 theologians, mostly Presbyterians, who were supposed to settle matters regarding church ritual, theology, and government (1643). Not until six years later did this assembly complete its labors, presenting a new order of worship and an elaborate statement of Calvinistic theology that is known as the "Westminster Confession." By this time, however, conditions had changed so completely that neither the prayer book nor the creed was approved by parliament. Both were accepted for many years, however, by the Presbyterian churches of Great Britain and America.

New sects

At the same time new religious leaders were beginning to preach strange doctrines of many sorts. Perhaps the most interesting and most radical of these new leaders was George Fox (1624-1691), founder of the Society of Friends (or "Quakers"), who began preaching about 1647. He urged the abolition of all clergy, leaving each individual to be guided only by his own "inner light"; he accepted all the Gospel teachings, even to the point of nonresistant pacifism; and he favored complete political democracy. His followers have never been numerous, but their high characters have given them an importance in England and America far greater than their numbers would suggest. Other groups, often calling themselves "Baptists," revived the doctrines of the Anabaptists of the preceding century. The leader of one such group was John Bunyan (1628-1688), a soldier in Cromwell's army and later a tinker and itinerant preacher, whose famous allegory, *Pilgrim's Progress*, has remained a popular favorite almost to our own day. Others, known as "Fifth Monarchy Men," went about prophesying that the Fifth Monarchy, foretold in the Biblical Book of Daniel, was about to appear. Still others preferred political to religious terminology. Thus the followers of John Lilburne (1614-1657, another of Cromwell's soldiers) were called "Levellers" because they wished to make all men equal politically.

Failure of Richard Cromwell

These men, and countless others like them, kept all England in a turmoil during the Commonwealth and Protectorate. As long as Cromwell was alive he kept things together, but he died in 1658 and his son Richard was quite incapable of conducting the government. By this time all England was tired of controversy, and anything seemed preferable to the existing state of affairs. Rule by the army and the saints had often proved to be more than a trifle irksome. Royalists began talking about the good old days and dreamed up new

virtues for "Saint Charles, King and Martyr." Important leaders then began to consider restoring the monarchy under Charles II.

Richard Cromwell resigned the office of Lord Protector in May, 1659, eight months after his father's death, and the Rump Parliament reassembled to take over the government of England. It was no more successful than he, even though it was presently joined by all the surviving members of the Long Parliament, elected nearly twenty years before. This body invited Charles II to return and rule England, after which it formally dissolved (1660). The new king was received with great enthusiasm, and his arrival marked the beginning of the Restoration period in English history. The lofty dream of making England over into a Biblical theocracy was quickly forgotten, but out of the political and religious ferment of the crucial years of the Puritan revolution there had arisen countless ideas regarding democracy and popular liberty which mankind has never forgotten and which we in America still regard as fundamental to our form of government and our way of life.

*Restoration
of
Charles II*

43. THE INTELLECTUAL REVOLUTION

*The heroic
age of
science*

ON previous pages several reasons have been suggested for the fundamental revolution in men's manner of life and thought that came over Europe in the seventeenth century, yet one factor of high importance still awaits discussion. This is the gradual development of natural science. The intellectual giants who founded modern science—men like Robert Boyle, Christian Huyghens, and, above all, Sir Isaac Newton—did their great work in the second half of the seventeenth century, but their achievements were made possible by predecessors who undermined the exaggerated reverence for Aristotle that had trammelled scientific thought throughout the Middle Ages and early modern times, and who laughed out of court such pseudo sciences as alchemy and astrology. This preliminary clearing of the field was largely completed by 1650, and a few daring pioneers had even made a fair beginning in gathering new information and in devising new ways to learn scientific truth.

THE RISE OF NATURAL SCIENCE

*Nicholas
Copernicus*

One of the earliest of the new sciences was astronomy. In the Middle Ages men had usually accepted the "Ptolemaic" system—so called from the Alexandrian astronomer, Claudius Ptolemaeus (c. A.D. 150; see page 225), who taught that the earth is the center of the universe and that sun, moon, planets, and stars revolve around it in complicated orbits. This theory was now rejected, and the foundations of a new system of astronomy were laid by a Polish physician

and astronomer, Nicholas Copernicus (1473–1543). After studying for several years in Italy, and being ordained a priest, Copernicus returned to Poland and devoted himself to astronomical studies. These investigations convinced him that, while the moon does indeed revolve around the earth, the earth and other planets revolve around the sun, and that the sun merely seems to revolve around the earth because the earth itself is spinning on its axis. Copernicus had finished his book, *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* ("On the Revolutions of the Celestial Bodies"), before 1530, but he dared not publish it until 1543, when he was already on his deathbed.

At first Copernicus's book was greeted with jeers and charges of heresy, but gradually his ideas were accepted by other scientists, and before 1650 they were widely shared by educated people everywhere. A mass of new material collected by the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe (1546–1601)—who still believed in astrology and who did not accept the new theory—was arranged by his German pupil, Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), who corrected some of Copernicus's minor errors. The new theory was popularized, however, by the Italian scientist Galileo Galilei (1564–1642).

A man of the highest scientific ability, Galileo made brilliant contributions to physics and other sciences, as well as writing on astronomy. About 1609 he constructed a telescope with which he was able to observe four moons revolving around the planet Jupiter. This discovery seemed to him conclusive proof that Copernicus was right, but it brought him into trouble. As early as 1616 the Inquisition condemned Galileo's doctrines and ordered him to keep silent regarding them, fearful lest they unsettle the faith of the people. For several years Galileo wrote no more on the subject, but at last he published his brilliant and famous *Dialogue Concerning the Two Major Systems of the World* (1632). Here he presented the rival views, seemingly with impartiality, but with the preponderance of evidence so overwhelmingly in favor of the new astronomy that few readers could doubt its truth. Again Galileo fell into the toils of the Inquisition, which forced him to recant, ordered him to repeat the seven penitential psalms once a week for the next three years, and kept him under close surveillance for the rest of his life. Legend later reported that after making his famous recantation, denying that the earth moves, Galileo arose from his knees and whispered to himself, "*Eppur se muove!*" ("But it does move, all the same!") Though this story is not true, it certainly ought to be.

**Brahe and
Kepler**

**Galileo
Galilei**



COPERNICUS. (Bettmann Archive)

**Galileo's
study of
physics**

Galileo's interest in physics was even greater than his interest in astronomy, and his contributions to that science were more numerous and more important. It is said that as a boy he had noticed that pendulums of the same length swing in the same time, no matter how wide their sweep, and that he speculated on how to use this discovery in making clocks. His experiments with falling bodies proved that, in spite of Aristotle, light weights fall just as rapidly as heavy ones, and at a regularly increasing speed. Above all, however, he was interested in the laws regulating the motion of bodies and the paths of projectiles. At about the same time William Gilbert (1540-1603), once physician to Queen Elizabeth, was experimenting with magnets and electricity. Somewhat later the Frenchman Blaise Pascal (1623-1662), made important discoveries concerning air pressure and the behavior of fluids.

**The new
science of
medicine**

The new science of medicine had begun to progress in the fifteenth century, when professors in the Italian universities first based their lectures on the works of the Greek Galen rather than those of the Arabic Avicenna. From Italy the new medicine spread quickly to the



GALILEO. (Bettmann Archive)

rest of western Europe. Thus Thomas Linacre (c. 1460–1524), an English humanist trained in Italy, carried copies of Galen's writings to England, lectured on them at Oxford, became the personal physician of Henry VIII, and founded the English College of Physicians (1518). Before long, however, European doctors were creating a new science of medicine that did not rely upon either Galen or Avicenna.

Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim (c. 1493–1541), commonly known as Paracelsus, was an eccentric and original character who did much to discredit the old theories, and who must be counted among the founders of modern medicine. Born in German Switzerland, he was driven by his restless nature to travel widely and to try his hand at many things, but he was primarily a physician and he taught medicine for several years at Basel. He openly and vehemently expressed his contempt for Avicenna, Galen, and Hippocrates, and his boasting made him ridiculous. (Our word "bombast" is derived from Paracelsus's family name.) His two great contributions to medical science came from his insistence that the art of healing must be learned by observing patients, not by studying ancient books, and

Paracelsus

from his advocacy of what he called chemical therapy—that is, healing by the use of drugs. He once remarked that the true function of alchemy was not the creation of gold but the preparation of medicines. So little was known of chemistry in his day, however, that not much progress could be made.

**Founders
of modern
medicine**

The Frenchman Ambroise Paré (1510–1590) was a surgeon who accompanied Francis I's army to Italy. At first his writings were regarded askance by the profession, but he was later recognized as a pioneer in modern surgery. Even more important than Paré, however, was the contemporary Fleming Andreas Vesalius (1514–1564), who served for several years as professor of anatomy in various Italian universities. He was one of the first to base his knowledge of anatomy, not upon Galen, but upon the careful observation of the human body. His criticisms of Galen brought him enemies, who eventually denounced him to the Inquisition for dissecting a human cadaver. To escape more drastic punishment, he went on a pilgrimage to Palestine as penance, and during the return trip he was lost in a shipwreck. Vesalius has been called the father of modern anatomy. Lastly, mention must be made of the English physician William Harvey (1578–1657). Trained in the medical school at Padua, Harvey is famous especially for his discovery of the circulation of the blood and for his studies of embryos.

New tools

Equally important with the new knowledge gained by these investigators were the new tools of investigation which were being perfected during these crucial years. Mathematics made great progress, partly by the popularization or invention of such labor-saving devices as decimals and logarithms, and partly by the discovery of new branches of mathematics. René Descartes (1596–1650) invented analytical geometry, and Pascal made important contributions to the theory of probability. Others invented new tools for observation or measurement—the thermometer, the barometer, the telescope, the microscope, the pendulum clock, the air pump, and many others. And finally, in the year 1582, Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) introduced the improved calendar which still bears his name and is now used throughout the European world. The old Julian calendar was slightly too long, and had gained ten days since it was inaugurated by Julius Caesar in the year 46 B.C. Gregory corrected this defect by dropping ten days in March, 1582, and by ordering that thereafter the last year of a century should not be a leap year unless its number is divisible by 400 (i.e., 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not leap years while 1600 was

and 2000 will be). Catholic countries accepted the new calendar at once, but Protestant and Greek Orthodox delayed for religious reasons. England did not adopt the "new style" calendar until 1752, Russia until 1918, or Greece until 1923.

THE NEW PHILOSOPHY

These early natural scientists discovered and published an enormous number of new facts about the physical world. Their additions to human knowledge paralleled, and eventually surpassed, those of Columbus and the other early explorers. But these additions to knowledge were only a part of what the scientists and explorers contributed to civilization. They also undermined the foundations of the medieval view of the world. When the newly discovered facts could not be harmonized with the teachings of such ancient writers as Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Galen, those venerable authorities had to be discarded. The task of dethroning Aristotle proved more difficult than that of decapitating Charles I, however, for it entailed the collapse of much of the formal philosophy that underlay medieval thinking. In the end, however, the scientists prevailed over the ancients.

*Science
and the
medieval
world*

Galileo was by no means the only writer or thinker in these stormy times to suffer at the hands of the Inquisition for questioning Aristotle or the Scriptures, for popularizing the new scientific knowledge, and for emancipating himself as best he could from the old patterns of thought. Giordano Bruno (1548–1600) was burned at the stake after languishing for several years in ecclesiastical prisons. Nevertheless, his defense of the new astronomy and his vigorous attacks upon ancient writers and the Scriptures (which he put in the same class with Greek mythology) influenced many of Europe's leading philosophers during the next two or three centuries. Similarly Tommaso Campanella (1568–1639) was imprisoned at Naples for twenty-seven years because of alleged sympathy with revolutionists trying to expel the Spaniards from the city. After his release from the king's fortress, he spent several years more in the prisons of the Inquisition. Eventually, however, he escaped to France, where he was protected by Cardinal Richelieu. He too denounced Aristotle and discussed the larger problems of philosophy in numerous books written during his incarceration, but he is best known for a Utopia entitled *Civitas Solis* ("The City of the Sun"). These writers, and countless others, eventually convinced the thinking world that Aristotle and the ancients were not final authorities on all mundane matters, and in so doing they put

*Aristotle
dethroned*



FRANCIS BACON. (Bettmann Archive)

**Francis
Bacon**

an end to the "trickle down" theory of knowledge (see page 567) that had dominated European thought throughout the Middle Ages.

The discovery and popularization of new methods for learning the truth, and of new criteria for testing it, proved even more difficult than had been the freeing of men's minds from thralldom to Aristotle. The task could not be accomplished overnight. Two men of the early seventeenth century may be mentioned, however, because their writings encouraged thinking of a new type. Francis Bacon (1561–1626) was an English lawyer and statesman who served James I, at first as attorney-general (often crossing swords with the formidable Coke) and later as lord chancellor, but who was impeached by parliament in 1621. He was the author of celebrated *Essays*, but his importance as a philosopher rests largely upon two books, *The Advancement of Learn-*



DESCARTES. (Culver)

ing (1605) and especially the Latin *Novum Organum* (1620), in which he urged that reliance upon Aristotle and his "deductive" logic should be replaced by experimentation and observation. He also attempted to supplement, or replace, Aristotle's logic with an "inductive" logic, by which general "laws" or ideas could be deduced from individual experiments and observations. In his *New Atlantis* Bacon spoke eloquently of the practical benefits that might accrue to mankind if nature were studied scientifically.

A few years later the French mathematician René Descartes (1596–1650; see page 790) published a little book entitled *A Discourse on Method* (1637), in which he emphasized the necessity for systematic skepticism, for breaking down every problem into its component parts, and for constructing general ideas rationally from clear and distinct axioms. Neither Bacon nor Descartes was himself an important scientific investigator, yet each contributed greatly to the progress of science by his criticisms of old procedures and by his attempts to formulate a truly scientific method for learning the secrets of nature.

**René
Descartes**

**Universal
reign of
law**

Even these early writers recognized one of the fundamental principles upon which all scientific knowledge and research rests. They had observed the uniformity of nature and had concluded that everything behaves according to universal and unchanging laws. This idea of universal law was of course not new. It had been taught by philosophers in antiquity, and it had not been forgotten in the Middle Ages. Unfortunately, however, many men had come to believe that these laws of nature were merely the edicts of an arbitrary Deity who might rather easily be bribed or cajoled into suspending or altering them to suit the whims of a favorite. The new science, on the other hand, admitted no exceptions to universal law. Is it wholly fanciful, therefore, to suggest a parallel between the scientist teaching the universality of natural law and Charles I learning, too late, that even kings are subject to the laws of their land?

**New
theological
thinking**

Other writers were not slow to introduce these new ideas into theological discussions. The quarrels of Catholics and Protestants, and of the Protestant sects among themselves, had by this time come to seem rather inane. Many men now agreed with the new philosophers that truth can be discovered only by observation, or by reasoning based on observation (not from revelation), and they were impressed by the universality of natural law. Such men occasionally dreamed of a new religion that would be "rational" and "universal." It would claim no special revelation, and it would therefore appeal to rational men everywhere.

**Herbert of
Cherbury**

Early in the seventeenth century Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648) began speculating along such lines. After a few romantic years as a mercenary soldier on the Continent, Herbert had become James I's ambassador to Paris (where he arranged the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria), and later he served Charles I in important capacities. On the outbreak of the Civil War he declared his neutrality, but later submitted to parliament. The direction of his thinking is shown by the titles of two books he wrote in Latin, *De Veritate* ("On the True, as Distinguished from the Revealed, the Probable, the Possible, and the False," 1624) and *De Religione Gentilium* ("On the Religion of the Gentiles," 1645). In these works he reduced all theology to the five fundamental propositions that there is a God, that he should be worshiped, that he is best worshiped by virtue and piety, that men should repent of their sins and cease therefrom, and that there are rewards and punishments both here and hereafter. On the basis of these writings Lord Herbert has been

called "the Father of Deism." At first few persons were prepared to limit themselves to this scanty creed, but we shall presently see that in the next century "deism"—as this type of religion came to be called—influenced the religious thinking of almost every educated man in western Europe.

THE STUDY OF SOCIETY

At one point in the sixteenth century it seemed that the new scientific methods, applied to the study of society, might create a social science. Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) was a Florentine lawyer. When the Medici were expelled from the city in 1494, he was appointed to a secretaryship that eventually gave him general supervision over the foreign affairs of the republic, which post he retained

**Niccolò
Machiavelli**



MACHIAVELLI. (Bettmann Archive)

until the Medici were restored by papal armies eighteen years later (see page 654). He was then dismissed and never again did he hold an important public office. The remaining fifteen years of his life he devoted to study and writing. It seemed to him, as it had seemed to Thucydides and other writers in antiquity, that the phenomena of social life, like those of nature, follow uniform patterns and that, if only the facts of history were carefully collected and studied, general laws describing the functioning of society might be learned from them, just as the laws of nature can be learned by carefully observing natural phenomena. He believed that the study of history could thus be made the foundation of a science of society and a school for statesmanship. As a matter of fact, however, in his writings he merely defended his personal political opinions with illustrations drawn from history.

**His
historical
writings**

Machiavelli was more than a Florentine. He was an Italian nationalist who yearned to see the entire peninsula united under one government, comparable to that of France or Spain. He therefore began his historical studies by investigating the early days of Rome, as described by Livy. In a book entitled *Discourse on the First Decade of Titus Livius* (1517) he attempted to show how Rome's unification of Italy should serve as a guide for the Italians of his own day. Nine years later he published an excellent *History of Florence*, written from the same point of view. In analyzing his country's woes, he laid especial blame upon the barbarous mercenaries who had so often betrayed their employers and conquered them (he urged their replacement by a citizen militia) and upon the popes who, since the days of Pepin and Charlemagne, had so often called the barbarians into Italy. He eloquently urged that Italy be delivered from these woes.

The Prince

Machiavelli wrote his best-known book, *The Prince* (1513), when at the height of disillusionment after his fall from power, but it was not published until five years after his death (1532). In this little book he described the leader who, in his opinion, would be able to "free Italy from the barbarians." This leader would have to be a man devoid of moral scruples, who kept treaties only when he found it convenient to do so, who feigned piety in order to impress the superstitious multitude, and who cynically relied only upon armed force. It has been suggested that Machiavelli's model was Caesar Borgia, but it might as well have been almost any other contemporary statesman. Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Francis I of France, the Italian

despots, and the various popes of the day all shared the moral standards of *The Prince* and lived up to them (or down to them) according to their abilities. Machiavelli was not a preacher or a moralist but merely a keen observer who drew a vivid and extraordinarily accurate picture of sixteenth-century diplomatic practice, but because of his reputation as a cynical realist, we are likely to be a little surprised when we read that Machiavelli's friends considered him a dreamy idealist; yet such he was when he thought of the future of Italy.

While Machiavelli may have dreamed of creating a science of society based upon the study of history, the controversies accompanying the Protestant Reformation put an end to any such aspirations. The Christian humanists and the early Protestants had quite earnestly studied history to learn the teachings of Jesus and the practices of the early church, it is true, but controversialists on both sides soon replaced sober history with reckless propaganda. Thus a professor at Wittenberg named Flacius Illyricus (1520-1575) published the twelve volumes of the *Magdeburg Centuries*—so called because he included one century in each volume—which purported to be a history covering the first twelve centuries of the church, although it dealt mainly with the shortcomings of the popes. The work was on a very low level, but it was so effective that Cardinal Baronius (1538-1607) devoted his life to compiling a huge rebuttal. Another popular work of this sort was John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of the Christian Faith*—better known as *The Book of Martyrs* (1563)—which describes in gruesome detail the tribulations of evangelical reformers, particularly under "Bloody Mary." It long remained a favorite among English-speaking Protestants.

**Protestant
historians**

The Jesuits, however, soon added something important to Europe's conception of history. These Jesuits conducted the best schools in Europe, and as they were always inspired by a strong loyalty to each other, they gave careful attention in their classes and writings to the members of their order who had gone as missionaries to various parts of the non-Christian world. This led them to say something of these foreign peoples, and the field of history was broadened. The thin stream of Mediterranean and western European history, which had satisfied the Middle Ages, was no longer enough. Moreover, this broader view of history often raised difficult problems. From which of the three sons of Noah, for example, were the American Indians descended? Much of the Christian Epic was thus called into question, and a new world history had to be devised to replace that epic. The

**Jesuit
historians**

task was long and difficult, requiring the labors of many generations of scholars, but the early Jesuits were among the first to try.

Political Theory

Divine right of kings

In the two centuries under discussion the prevailing theory of government declared that kings ruled by "divine right." This doctrine was only a slight modification of theories developed by spokesmen of the imperial faction during the late Middle Ages. When medieval popes insisted that political authority descended from God through themselves to the emperors, imperial apologists often replied by asserting that it descended from God to emperor and pope directly and equally, with political authority going to the emperors and spiritual authority to the popes. Lulier and the Protestant princes eliminated the pope entirely and simply declared that all power descended from God to the prince. This particular aspect of Protestantism proved highly attractive to kings everywhere, no matter what their religious allegiance might be, and the "divine right of kings" became standard doctrine in France as well as in Germany, in England as well as in Spain.

What it taught

The doctrine was stated in various ways, but most writers agreed upon a few essential points. (1) The king's right and power to rule came directly from God, and therefore it could not be limited by men: the doctrine was a theological justification of royal absolutism. (2) The right to rule passed from father to son—or other heir—by the accepted rules of primogeniture: there could never be a dispute, therefore, as to who was the lawful king. (3) The person of the king being sacred, any attack upon him was an attack upon God himself. (4) The king enjoyed divine wisdom, implanted at the moment of his coronation or anointing: he must therefore always be right, even though his sinful subjects might fail to realize how right he was.

What it implied

Supported by a wide variety of arguments—usually drawn from the Scriptures, and especially from the Old Testament narratives concerning the early kings of Israel—these fundamental doctrines underlay most of the political thought of the seventeenth century. They may seem fantastic to us, but at bottom they were little more than an attempt to say, in the language of that day, that government should be permanent and stable, not subject to the momentary whims of the populace, and above all that the right to rule was not a prize for the man with the best army. In fact, the proponents of the doctrine appar-

ently had much the same thought in mind as did the Roman emperors when they proclaimed their divinity. Today people say much the same thing in other words and justify themselves with other arguments.

In a certain sense, the most successful critics of the divine right theory were the kings themselves. When Philip II sent one assassin after another to murder Queen Elizabeth, he made it clear that his contempt for the divine right of kings equaled his contempt for ordinary morality. As a practicing critic of the doctrine, the headsman who decapitated Charles I was even more effective. Yet there were writers who justified Philip's activities. In the last year of that king's life (1598) a Spanish Jesuit named Juan de Mariana (1536-1624) published a book defending the overthrow or assassination of tyrannical or heretical rulers. During the wave of hysteria that followed the murder of Henry IV (1610), Mariana's book was burned in Paris by the public executioner. A much milder and more scholarly criticism of the doctrine was formulated by another Spanish Jesuit, Francisco Suarez (1548-1617), a learned man who was much respected by Protestants and Catholics alike. Discarding the doctrine of the medieval popes, he taught that all power descends from God to the people, who in turn confer it upon their kings. From this it followed that the people could withdraw what they had granted, should the king become tyrannical, heretical, or otherwise unacceptable. Suarez insisted, however, that only the people as a whole, who had conferred the power, had the right to withdraw it. Individual assassins, such as the man who murdered Henry IV, had no right to take the law into their own hands, but the pope, as spiritual leader, might depose a king who endangered the souls of his subjects by tolerating heresy or other sins.

**Critics of
divine
right**

A rival doctrine, much favored by Calvinists, was the "contract theory of government." Writers of this school were fond of picturing the sorry state of early man, when the absence of government caused a perpetual "war of all against all." It was then said that, in order to put an end to this anarchy, men leagued together in societies and formed governments whose purpose was to preserve peace: they entered into a contract with someone, granting him certain specified powers, in return for which he provided peace and security for all. If he failed to do so, or if he overreached the powers accorded to him by the original contract, his subjects had the right to dethrone him. Such a usurpation of power was the "treason" for which Charles I was

**Contract
theory of
govern-
ment**

beheaded. Of course historians could not show copies of the original contract, and there was no agreement as to its precise terms, yet the "contract theory" was destined to a brilliant future. From it was deduced the maxim "All government rests upon the consent of the governed"; the American Declaration of Independence was based on it; and the Constitution of the United States may be regarded as a late but authentic example of such a contract.

**Hugo
Grotius**

One other writer on political science deserves mention here. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) was a Dutch humanist and lawyer, but when he urged mutual toleration upon the contending sects in Holland he lost the favor of all and was thrown in jail. Throughout his life he continued to urge a reconciliation of Catholics and Protestants on the basis of piety rather than theology. In the end he expressed



GROTIUS. (Bettmann Archive)

theological views somewhat resembling those of his friend Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Grotius's fame rests, however, upon his book *De Jure Belli et Pacis* ("On the Law of War and Peace," 1625). In his youth Grotius had written an account of the atrocities perpetrated by Alva and other Spaniards during the Dutch wars of independence; and in later years he developed the doctrine of the *mare liberum* ("free sea") to defend the right of the Dutch to trade in the East Indies, where the Portuguese sought to maintain a monopoly. These experiences, as well as his broad and humane views regarding religious toleration and his deistic enthusiasm for a universe governed by law, led Grotius to suggest that the horrors of war might be mitigated if all the powers agreed to certain laws regarding the conduct of hostilities. From the small beginnings set forth in his famous book grew the mighty edifice of modern international law.

ARTS AND LETTERS

Meantime the "renaissance of arts and letters" was continuing to receive brilliant literary and artistic expression. Italy still was held in high regard in western Europe and was visited regularly by artists, writers, and scientists, but that unfortunate peninsula, robbed of its trade and bankrupted by the commercial revolution, overrun and trampled under foot by countless foreign armies, and smothered by the Inquisition, had lost its former leadership in creative intellectual activity. Much the same fate had befallen "the Germanies." Leadership in painting, and in the fine arts generally, passed to Spain and the Netherlands; Spaniards and Englishmen produced brilliant literatures; and while France was not then enjoying a period of greatness in literature and art, her achievements in both fields were nonetheless distinguished.

The name "baroque" is applied principally to the architecture of this period, but in the seventeenth century the baroque spirit permeated the other arts as well. The baroque architects and painters had been trained in the High Renaissance of Michelangelo, but they modified its spirit to suit new times and new patrons. Their patrons were the high ecclesiasties of the Counter-Reformation period or kings of the new national states. These men wished to emphasize their mundane grandeur with large and impressive palaces and churches, insisting that every detail be planned to produce the effect of greatness. More important than these ambitious kings and bishops, how-

**Cultural
decline of
Italy and
Germany**

**Baroque
art**



GESÙ, ROME

ever, were the Jesuits, who sponsored the best baroque art, using it to impress the faithful with the splendor and greatness of their church. A desire to create the impression of grandeur sometimes led to luxuriousness and theatrical artificiality, to the excessive use of involved and billowy curves, to false fronts, and to countless pretentious but superfluous ornaments. Nevertheless, baroque architects sometimes created very impressive buildings. St. Peter's at Rome was almost finished before the new style became popular, but its very vastness made it a model for later artists. The founder of the baroque school, the architect and sculptor Giovanni Bernini (1598-1680), added the present façade as well as the plaza and colonnades in front of the church, and much of its interior decoration was done by baroque artists. More in conformity with the new style is the Gesù (the Jesuit



STURBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS, PURITAN CHURCH. These two churches bring out the contrast between the Catholic Church of the Counter-Reformation period and Puritanism. The Gesù (built 1568-1584) as the principal church of the Jesuits in Rome is a fine example of baroque architecture. The church at Sturbridge dates from the eighteenth century, and well exemplifies the austerity and simplicity of Puritan life.

church in Rome), but perhaps the world's most famous example of baroque architecture is the enormous palace and gardens built for Louis XIV at Versailles in the 1670's. Many people, however, prefer the smaller baroque churches to be found in Spain and Latin America, among them the mission churches in California that were "restored" in the twentieth century.

The austerity of the Calvinists, and of early Protestantism in general, was not conducive to comparable church building in northern Europe. Only in the latter part of the seventeenth century did Sir

**Protestant
church
architecture**

Christopher Wren (1632-1723) create the style exemplified in the "New England meeting house." Here are clearly to be seen the influence of the new religious beliefs and practices and of Calvinistic intellectualism as well. Though quite plain inside and out, and decorated only with their soaring steeples, these churches often are strikingly beautiful because of their simplicity and harmonious proportions. Altars have been removed, and the whole interior is so arranged that the attention of the congregation is centered on the pulpit with its Bible. The men who built these churches obviously preferred preaching and Bible reading to the elaborate ritual of the Catholic Church.



EL GRECO: ST. JEROME. (Frick Collection, New York)



EL GRECO: CARDINAL NIÑO DE GUEVARA. These two paintings by El Greco show two aspects of the Counter-Reformation in Spain. He pictures the fourth-century St. Jerome as a Roman cardinal, a thoughtful and learned scholar, but yet a profoundly troubled man. Cardinal Niño de Guevara was Archbishop of Toledo and Grand Inquisitor of Spain. This pale man, who could not relax even for a moment (notice how his left hand clutches the arm of the chair), could send countless persons to horrible deaths for heresy, witchcraft, or Judaism. (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

El Greco

Not until the present century did critics learn to appreciate El Greco as one of the world's greatest painters. Born in Crete and trained by Italian masters at Venice and Rome, Domenico Theotokopoulos (1541-1614), commonly called El Greco, migrated to Spain about 1576 and settled in Toledo, then the heart and center of the Spanish Counter-Reformation. He came to know the religious and intellectual leaders of Spain well. A deeply thoughtful man, even a tormented one, he was remarkably successful in portraying the new religious spirit in his paintings—its piety and visionary mysticism, its austere asceticism, its idealism and learning, but also its baroque pride in pomp and circumstance. El Greco was essentially a mystic, and in his magnificent paintings he found subtle ways to express his misgivings about the popular manifestations of the religious spirit in the Spain of his day. No wonder we are told that Philip II, the very incarnation of the Spanish Counter-Reformation, cordially detested El Greco and all his works. More typical of the Spanish baroque are the paintings of Rodriguez Velasquez (1599-1660), court painter to Philip IV and famous for his portraits and realistic scenes from daily life, and of Bartolomé Murillo (1617-1682), who pictured a softer version of Spanish religious life than El Greco in his various paintings of the "Assumption of the Virgin."

**Rubens and
Rembrandt**

Painters of equal merit were active in the Netherlands. The Flemish school of painting, which was born in the fifteenth century, now produced its finest works. Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), perhaps the most familiar of baroque painters, was noted both for the religious scenes (such as the "Descent from the Cross") which he painted for churches and for the scenes from pagan mythology and portraits painted for the Flemish and French aristocracy. He was a prolific artist, his commissions being so numerous that he often had time only to sketch the figures on the canvas and add a few finishing touches after assistants had filled out the sketches. Naturally such painting could not express the deep thought that underlay El Greco's careful works. Dutch painting was derived from the Flemish, which it closely resembled in the early days, but when Holland became a Protestant country, her painters were forced into new paths. Calvinist churches never were embellished with paintings, and pious people frowned upon scenes from pagan mythology. Dutch artists therefore specialized in portraits or pictured groups of persons or landscapes. The most admired of these Dutch painters, Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669), is accounted one of the greatest artists of all time.

**Baroque
music**

The seventeenth century also witnessed rapid progress in music. Like other forms of baroque art, the music of this age was designed especially to serve the Catholic Church. Luther had been gifted musically and appreciated the value of music in arousing religious emotions, but he took church music as it was, adding little to what he found. In the early days of the Counter-Reformation, however, Catholics under Jesuit inspiration developed something really new. The first of the great modern musicians, Palestrina (1525-1594), was followed by a host of others, both Catholic and Protestant, who not only composed in new styles better suited to their purposes but also invented new musical instruments and devised wholly new forms in which to express themselves. Organs, harpsichords, and other keyboard instruments able to play chords were greatly improved; the violin was invented; and musicians presently began composing for orchestras. The religious inspiration of the new music was manifest in the oratorio, a new form in which the church liturgy or words of Scripture were sung. Out of the oratorio grew the opera, which at first dealt with religious subjects but which soon was secularized. The first opera house was built at Venice in 1637. This new music was always written with an elaboration and a splendor that harmonized perfectly with the similar tendencies in the rest of baroque art. In all these developments Italy took the lead, but in the seventeenth century the new music spread through Europe.

Renaissance Literature

Fourteenth-century Italy had produced three literary men with European reputations—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—but thereafter her literature did not equal her contributions to humanism, art, and science. Perhaps this literary decline came because Italian humanism, with its admiration of the ancient classics, turned men's minds away from original creation. In the sixteenth century, however, Baldassare Castiglione (1478-1529), an adventurer who served various despots and popes, published a work entitled *Il Cortegiano* ("The Courtier," 1528), which became famous as a guide to courtly life, and Benvenuto Cellini (1500-1571), a Florentine goldsmith and sculptor, wrote an *Autobiography* which has remained a classic. Meantime Matteo Boiardo (1434-1494), had composed a long epic poem, *Orlando Innamorato* (1487), in which he retold the legends of Roland, the companion of Charlemagne (see page 418). Thirty

**Literature
in Italy**

years later Lodovico Ariosto (1474–1533) continued the story in his more famous epic, *Orlando Furioso* (1516). For many years Ariosto was pensioned by the Cardinal d'Este, and later by his brother, Alfonso d'Este (the third and final husband of Lucrezia Borgia), under whom Ferrara became the literary capital of Italy.

**Torquato
Tasso**

The last of the Italian poets of the late Renaissance was Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), whose masterpiece, *Gerusalemme Liberata* ("Jerusalem Delivered," 1575), deals with the capture of the Holy City by the crusaders in 1099. Educated by the Jesuits, and for several years in the service of another Cardinal d'Este, Tasso was a deeply religious man, but throughout his life he was unfortunate and unhappy. His morbid (but groundless) fear of the Inquisition gave him a persecution mania, and for several years he had to be confined in an asylum at Ferrara. Nevertheless his poem is one of the most famous in Italian literature, well expressing the nobler aspirations of the Italian Counter-Reformation.

**The Renais-
sance in
France**

The French Renaissance reached its full development, both in art and in literature, under Francis I (1515–1547). Inspired by what he had seen during his wars in Italy, Francis engaged Italian architects and artists to help in the building and decoration of his ornate palaces: the Louvre in Paris, which, much expanded, is now the world-famous picture gallery and museum, and one at Fontainebleau some forty miles away. Among these guests were Leonardo da Vinci and Cellini. Mention must also be made of Francis's sister, Marguerite of Navarre (1492–1549), the grandmother of Henry IV, from whom he inherited his Protestantism. A brilliant woman much interested in ideas, she made her court famous throughout Europe. Her poetry, dealing preferably with religious themes, was of a high order, and after her death friends published the *Heptaméron*, a collection of tales in the manner of Boccaccio, which may still be read with amusement and pleasure.

**François
Rabelais**

François Rabelais (c. 1490–1553) stood far above the other writers of the French Renaissance. During his early years as a Franciscan friar, and later as a Benedictine monk, he had studied Greek and become enthusiastic over the new learning. With the permission of his superiors, he presently left the monastery, took a medical degree at Montpellier, and practiced medicine at Lyons for several years. In the end he returned to the church as a parish priest. Rabelais's fame rests upon two books, *Pantagruel* (1533) and *Gargantua* (1535), recounting the fantastic adventures of two famous giants. Though filled

with broad and raucy humor, these books are a keen satire on the French society of that day, and they give evidence of deep thought on problems raised by humanistic education and Protestantism. Rabelais was much interested in the religious ideas of Erasmus, and for a while he was sympathetic with French Protestantism. The rigors of Calvinism were not to his taste, however, and he eventually concluded that his nature best suited him for a broad skepticism.

The other major French writer of the sixteenth century was Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592). Born to a wealthy family and trained in the law, he embarked upon a career in government service, but the troubles associated with the Wars of Religion caused him to resign his place and seek the peace and quiet of his family estate. After ten years of learned leisure he published the first collection of the charming *Essays* which made his reputation. Others followed later. Though his political sympathies lay with the party of the Politiques, and he had entertained Henry Bourbon at his country house before Henry became king, Montaigne's outstanding quality was an urbane and enlightened skepticism which made it difficult for him to follow any leader very far. This skeptical spirit permeates his *Essays*, and because of it they have been read with pleasure by confirmed doubters from that day to this. The Wars of Religion may have driven Montaigne into skepticism and literary immortality, but they brought forth no other literature of importance, and except for the early tragedies of Corneille (see Volume II, Chapter XVII), the fifty years after the Edict of Nantes produced little or nothing.

**Michel de
Montaigne**

In literature as in painting, the early years of the seventeenth century were Spain's golden age, and the greatest of her literary men was Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616). In his youth Cervantes had been wounded at Lepanto (1571; see page 743), and later he was captured by Moslem pirates and held for ransom at Algiers. Upon his release he tried his hand at playwriting without great success, and not until 1605 did he produce his masterpiece, *Don Quixote*. The hero of this rollicking story had read so many fantastic tales of chivalry that his head was quite turned and he imagined himself a knight-errant. Mounted on his lean and bony steed, Rosinante, and accompanied by his hard-headed but faithful squire, Sancho Panza, he wandered through central Spain seeking adventures such as those of which he had read. Adventures he found aplenty, but not exactly of the sort he sought. He tilted against windmills and fought with bands of sheep which, because of his near-sightedness, he mistook for giants

**Miguel de
Cervantes**

and hostile armies. He was clubbed time and time again by strangers, and eventually put in a cage as a lunatic, but Sancho Panza always rescued him before it was too late. At first Cervantes had planned to burlesque the popular romances of his day but, as he wrote, his hero grew upon him. He began to sympathize with Don Quixote, who became pathetic rather than ridiculous as he struggled courageously to defend the ideals of an age that had passed. Critics have sometimes seen in this fantastically idealistic knight and his earth-bound squire an allegory of all Spain.

**Spanish
mystics**

Equally typical of Spain are the writings of the two famous Spanish mystics, St. Theresa (1515-1582) and St. John of the Cross (1542-1591). Though Theresa had entered a Carmelite convent at the age of eighteen, she did not distinguish herself in any way until twenty years later, when she began having mystical visions. Like many mystics, she led an extremely active life thereafter, reforming her order, founding new convents, writing an autobiography, and describing her visions in mystical books that have been widely read down to the present day. The best known of these writings are *The Way of Perfection* and *The Castle of the Soul*. St. John of the Cross was her assistant and companion during her later years, and he too was one of the world's great mystics, as shown by his devotional book, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*.

**Elizabethan
England**

The most brilliant literary activity of all this period, however, was in England, which produced such writers as Shakespeare and Milton. For almost two centuries after the death of Chaucer in 1400, there was little English literature of merit, but toward the middle of the reign of Queen Elizabeth came a sudden burst of creative activity. The English language had been stabilized by the great translations of the Bible, beginning with Tyndale's New Testament (1525) and culminating in King James's Authorized Version (1611), and writers of genius now used the language forcefully to express their enthusiasm for the new age and its queen. Critics have often commented upon the similarities of spirit between the great Elizabethan writers and the Elizabethan mariners such as Drake and Hawkins. Both were marked by the same irresistible energy, the same vaulting ambition, the same imaginative power, the same impatience with old rules. Or it might be said that these Elizabethans, and especially Shakespeare, gave superlative expression to the spirit of the Renaissance, especially that of the lusty Italian or pagan Renaissance. But when we come to the literary men of the next century, of whom

Milton was the most distinguished, we quickly detect the very different spirit of the Christian Renaissance.

Of the life of Shakespeare little can be said. We know that he was born at Stratford-on-Avon in 1564, that for several years he was a successful actor and writer of plays in London, that he returned to Stratford a rich man about 1610, and that he died there in 1616. Beyond these meager facts we know little about him except what can be deduced from his poems and plays. Milton's life, however, is known in considerable detail. Born to well-to-do parents in 1608, he was educated at Cambridge and traveled in Italy. A thorough scholar in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and well acquainted with the literatures and scholarship of modern times, he was deeply concerned with political and religious problems. When the Civil War broke out, Milton espoused the parliamentary cause, and after the execution of

**Shake-
speare
and Milton**



SHAKESPEARE



JOHN MILTON. Supposedly the best surviving likeness of the poet, the portrait was painted from life by William Faithorne in 1670, when Milton was 62 years of age. This reproduction is taken from a copy of the first edition of Milton's *History of Britain* (1670).

Charles he was chosen to defend this act against European critics. Later he served Cromwell as Latin secretary until he lost his eyesight (1652). Before the war he had published lesser poems, and in the days of his blindness he composed his great theological epic, *Paradise Lost* (1667), and its sequel, *Paradise Regained* (1671). Here he set forth the whole Christian story of creation, the fall of man, and his eventual redemption. Milton's prose works include writings in favor of divorce, various treatises setting forth his Unitarian theology, political tracts, and, most famous of all, the *Arcopagitica* (1644). When the Presbyterians in the Long Parliament passed an act establishing press censorship, Milton replied with this classic plea for liberty of the press. Little has since been said on the subject that cannot be found in this eloquent pamphlet. By a happy inspiration the

authorities of a great university in the New World have had its most brilliant passages inscribed upon the walls of the Great Hall of their Student Center. Nothing could be more appropriate. Without liberty to speak and publish, no true university can exist, and as Milton eloquently declared, whenever this freedom is denied, civilization itself quickly falls into decline.

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